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THE METAMORPHOSES

OF

PUBLIUS OVIDIUS NASO

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TRANSLATED IN ENGLISH BLANK VERSE

BY

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ONLY A YEAR AGO

IT WAS MY HOPE TO BE ABLE TO OFFER THESE PAGES,

AS A TOKEN OF RESPECT,

POLITICAL, SOCIAL, AND LITERARY,

TO

EDWARD GEOFFREY, EARL OF DERBY,

SOMETIME PRIME MINISTER OF ENGLAND, CHANCELLOR OF THE UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD, AND TRANSLATOR OF 'THE ILIAD.'

"DIIS ALITER VISUM."

I PREFER THE EXPRESSION OF THAT VANISHED HOPE

TO ANY SUBSTITUTED DEDICATION.

JUNE, 1870.

PREFACE.

THERE are extant, as I learn from Lowndes, complete poetical translations of Ovid's great work, by Arthur Golding, "Gentleman," printed in 1567:—by George Sandys, in 1626:—by Sir Samuel Garth, M.D., and others, in 1717:—by J. J. Howard, in 1807:—and by Thomas Orger, in 1811. The last, I am informed, was printed only for private circulation.

I have never even seen the versions of Golding, Sandys, Howard, or Orger. Whatever their merits, the Public of 1870 knows absolutely nothing about them.

The still well-known version, "by Dr Garth and others," is the work of no less than eighteen different hands, good, bad, and indifferent, famous and forgotten. That fact alone suffices to show that it could hardly have been a labour of love. I am not concerned to inquire into the history of its making-up:—but, if Lowndes is right in giving 1717 as the date of

its earliest publication, it will be observed that Dryden, its largest and best contributor, to whom are due two whole Books and eight other portions of Books, died no less than seventeen years before the work appeared:—and two, at least, of his collaborateurs, Maynwaring and Tate, were dead when it was published. Garth himself died in 1718-19.

The Book, however compiled, was one of the delights of my boyhood, before I learned to read its original. It is *not* one of the delights of my more critical age. It seems, to me, generally to be lacking in Epic dignity. It is, of course, very unequal. Dryden is far from appearing at his best: but, in spite of his frequent carelessnesses, his introduction of incongruous modern representatives of classical words, his slovenly rhymes, his too numerous "needless Alexandrines," his triplets, his many lines (and those not of his worst) unwarranted by anything in the text, and his occasional coarseness of expression,—he is, as might be expected, "facilè Princeps" of the Contributors. Addison gives (with two or three remarkable omissions) a level respectable version of Books II. and III. Congreve, Rowe, Gay, and Pope are more briefly represented:—the last only by one short passage. Of the rank and file,—Eusden, Croxall, Tate, Stonestreet, Catcott, Temple-Stanyan, Vernon, Ozell, A. Maynwaring, "Esq.," and Stephen Harvey, "Esq.," —(the rest are all plain "Mr")—a good deal might be

said, if it were worth while to say it. Welsted, known now only by Pope's Dunciad line—

"Flow, Welsted, flow, like thine inspirer Beer"—

has the honour of concluding the version. (Lowndes mentions Ambrose Philips and Sewell as contributors, but I do not find their names in my edition of 1807.) The Editor, Sir Samuel Garth, M.D., himself is, in my judgment, immeasurably the worst of the lot. The Fourteenth Book, which is entirely from his pen, contains, in the original, 851 lines. Garth "does" it in 787 English. Those who know the proportions which English translation usually bears to Latin text —(and which it *does* bear in all the other Fourteen Books of his edition—) will judge, at once, how much he must have left out:—and anybody who takes the trouble to compare him throughout with his original, will hardly, I think, be disposed to admit that his portion of the work deserves the name of a translation at all.

The theme is tempting enough,—but I refrain from all detailed criticism. As, however, I have touched upon the subject of the relative proportions of translation and text, it may not be without statistical interest to add, that the original work contains 11,994 lines:—the version of Garth and his "eminent hands" extends to 16,546:—my own is comprised in 14,951.

I have left out very little indeed:—and I have

certainly inserted infinitely less than Garth and his collaborateurs. Without any pretension to rigid verbal fidelity, but avoiding mere paraphrase as much as possible, I have endeavoured to give a conscientious rendering of Ovid's language and ideas. Whether I have succeeded or failed, is not for me to judge.

I hope that in what I may call, for want of a better word, the "improper" passages of Ovid, while I have nowhere shirked the fair rendering of the Author's language, I have not in any instance heightened the warmth of his colouring. Ovid did not write, nor do I translate, "virginibus puerisque."

Lastly, I have, on consideration, resolved not to encumber the book with notes. Ovid assumes so much knowledge, mythological, historical, geographical, and genealogical, on the part of his readers, that to explain his innumerable undeveloped allusions fully to the mere-English student, would necessitate the translation of half the notes of the Delphin Commentators. And, whether rightly or wrongly, I am under the impression that the large majority of those who will take any interest in my book, will be persons already not unfamiliar with classical literature, and more or less able to supply from memory such explanations as notes would contain.

Anything like an Essay on Ovid's Life, Character, Times, and Works,—if such be still wanted,—I leave

to the Reviewers, if I find any.—And, with these few prefatory observations, I tender to the Public a Translation which has furnished employment and amusement for the leisure hours of three years past.

HENRY KING.

5 Paper Buildings, Inner Temple,
June 29, 1870.

THE

METAMORPHOSES

OF

PUBLIUS OVIDIUS NASO

BOOK I.

THE METAMORPHOSES.

BOOK I.

I. Of bodies into novel shapes transformed
My Muse the tale designs. Gods! (for ye too
Have tried these changes,) aid the bold emprise,
And, from the primal origin of things
Down to our times, deduce the unbroken song!
Ere Earth and Ocean and all-covering Heaven
Grew into separate form, great Nature's face
Through all existence but one aspect wore:—
Chaos 'twas called;—a rude unfeatured mass,—
A mere vast weight inert,—discordant seeds
Of ill-matched things in one huge heap compressed.
No Titan gladdened yet with light the world;—
No Phœbe filled anew her growing horns;—
No floating Earth in Æther circumfused
By her own weight hung balanced;—round the shores
No Amphitrite twined her circling arms.
Land, Water, Air, together mixed and blent;—
Land stable to no foot,—Water which gave
No space to swim,—and Air devoid of light.

No proper form to aught:—perpetual jar
And conflict, through the mass, of Hot to Cold
Opposed, of Wet to Dry, of Soft to Hard,
Of Light to Heavy,—till the Power divine
And kindlier Nature bade their contest cease,
Dividing Earth from Heaven, and Sea from Earth,
And liquid Æther from our grosser Air:
Which, from the blind heap where they lay, evolved,
And each to separate place assigned, she linked
Thenceforward in the holy bond of Peace.
Then first the weightless force of convex Heaven
Shot upward, like a fire, and took by right
The topmost station:—next beneath, the Air,
Second in lightness and in place. More dense
Than these, our Earth the grosser elements
Together drew, by her own weight depressed
To lower seat:—while Water, outmost, seized
The wardship of her borders new declared,
Circumfluent, belting the compacted World.

II. When thus whoever of the Gods it was
Disposed the severed mass, and severing ranged
Its elements,—first, lest our Earth should lie
From end to end one flat and level tract,
Into the fashion of a mighty globe
He orbed her form, around diffusing Seas,
Bidden to swell with force of rapid winds
Tumultuous, and embrace her circled shores.
Fountains he added,—meres, and lakes immense,
And falling rivers, hemmed 'twixt sinuous banks,
Whereof some, disappearing, in the soil

Absorbed are lost, and some, which reach the sea,
Adopted in that freer flood, desert
Their narrow banks, and lash an ampler shore.
Then spread he out the plains, and bade the vales
Subside;—with shading foliage roofed the woods,
And piled on high the rocky mountain-steeps.
Next, as two zones, alike to right and left,
With one more hot between, transsect the sky,—
With answering tracts the thoughtful God marked out
The included earth,—five also,—zone for zone:
Whereof the midmost glows too hot for life;
Too cold the extremes, snow-laden: but betwixt,
On either side, circles a kindlier belt,
With temperate mixture blessed of heat and cold.
O'er all the Air impends, heavier than Fire
As Earth than Water,—realm to mists assigned,
And clouds, and thunders, soon to shake with dread
The hearts of men, and lightnings, and all Winds
That numb the Earth with cold. Yet not to these
Through all that wide domain promiscuous range
Did He who shaped the world permit;—when scarce,
While each with separate blast his proper tract
O'ersweeps, her frame unriven stems their force.
Discordant band of brothers! wide o'er earth
Disparted:—Eurus to Aurora's realms,
Persia, and Nabathœa, and the peaks
First lighted with the rosy flush of morn:—
Zephyrus to Vesper, and the shores which lie
Warm with the setting Day-God. To the north
Rushed Boreas, raving over Scythian wastes
Terrific; while the opposing Pole extends

With rainy Auster moist and constant clouds.
Next above Air was liquid Æther placed,
Weightless, from all gross earthy mixture pure.
These scarce had in their several seats the God
Established, when the Stars, which long had lain
Weltering unmarked in chaos, through the expanse
Of Heaven's whole concave blazed in glory forth;
And, that no region of the world should lack
For living tenants, thus, with awful forms
Of Gods associate, peopled all the sky.
To glittering fish the waters gave a home;
To beasts the earth; to birds the restless air.
Something yet lacked—some holier being—dowered
With lofty soul, and capable of rule
And governance o'er all besides,—and MAN
At last had birth:—whether from seed divine
Of Him, the artificer of things, and cause
Of the amended world,—or whether Earth
Yet new, and late from Æther separate, still
Retained some lingering germs of kindred Heaven,
Which wise Prometheus, with the plastic aid
Of water borrowed from the neighbouring stream,
Formed in the likeness of the all-ordering Gods;
And, while all other creatures sought the ground
With downward aspect grovelling, gave to man
His port sublime, and bade him scan, erect,
The heavens, and front with upward gaze the stars.
And thus earth's substance, rude and shapeless erst,
Transmuted took the novel form of MAN.

III. The Golden Age was first:—when Faith and Right

Were honoured, by no law enforced with fear
Of pain or penalty. No tablets graved
Brazen, with threatening edicts bade men read
Their duties,—and no suppliant suitor quailed
At frown of judge austere :—but all were safe
Unguarded. Not as yet the axe had shorn
The pine-tree from its hills, dragged down to breast
The waves in search of foreign climes ; and men,
Save their own shores, no other region knew.
No trenches fenced with hollow belt the towns.
The sinuous horn, the straighter trump, the helm,
The sword, the soldier's use, as yet unknown,
Marred not the peaceful ease of life secure.
Spontaneous Earth, unwounded by the stroke
Of share or harrow, gave them all her store.
Content with food unlaboured, fruit they plucked
Of arbutus, or mountain-strawberry,
Cornels, black berries from the thorny bush,
And acorns dropped from Jove's wide-branching tree.
Amidst eternal Spring, the gentle breath
Of Zephyr fostering cheered the unsown flowers.
Earth gave her corn unploughed, and, year by year,
Unfallowed, whitened fresh with plenteous grain.
With flood of milk and nectar ran the streams,
And from the oak the honeyed gold distilled.

IV. When—Saturn down to darksome Tartarus hurled—
Jove ruled the world, the Age, of Silver called,
Succeeded, worse than that of Gold, but far
Before the following time of tawny Brass.
'Twas Jove the limits of the primal Spring

Contracted, and, with change of seasons four,
Winter, and Summer, Autumn variable,
And shortened Spring, filled out the furnished year.
Then first the torrid breath of August noons
Seemèd fraught with fire :—then first December winds
Glued to the eaves the pendent icicle :—
Then first men framed them houses, rude enough
At outset, in the cavern, or the hut
With branches roofed, and walled with wattled reeds.
Then in long furrows first the buried seed
Was laid, and 'neath the yoke the bullock groaned.

V. To this the Brazen Age succeeded third,
Sterner of bent, and prompt to horrid arms,
But not, as yet, to crime. For that reserved
Came the last Age, of Iron. Then at once
All wickedness on man's corrupted race
Burst flood-like. Fled dismayed Shame, Truth, and Faith,
And Fraud, and Snare, and Falsehood seized their place,
And Violence and the damnèd greed of Pelf.
For this the seaman spread his daring sail
To winds yet unencountered, and with keel
(Long time the glory of the mountain-side)
Adventurous bounded over unknown waves.
Earth's surface, common erst as light and air,
Was meted out with grasping fence and line ;
And more was asked of her than corn, and life's
Due nutriment :—her very bowels torn
Gave up that wealth, of all our ills the spring,
By her more wisdom in her mines concealed
Deep-locked, and neighbouring to the Stygian shades.

Hence hurtful iron, and more hurtful gold;
Hence War, who fights with both, with bloody hand
His clashing weapons wielding. Spoil henceforth
Is life's support and rule. The guest his host
Mistrusts, the sire his son: scarce holds the bond
Of brothers' faith: husband and wife alike
To wife and husband dangerous live: and fierce
The stepdame crowns with poisonous drugs the bowl.
Sires live too long,—and sons, impatient, ask
Why death so lingers? Kindly Piety
Lies trampled under foot; and Justice, last
Of heavenly kind, deserts the blood-stained earth.

VI. Nor Æther yet than Earth—so runs the tale—
More safe remained. The Giant brood attacked
The heavenly mansions, piling mount on mount
Heaped upward to the stars. But these the Sire
Omnipotent, with lightning-bolt, through all
Olympus flashing, hurled adown, and dashed
Ossa from Pelion headlong. Earth, 'tis said,
Long with the mass of bodies huge o'erwhelmed,
Was flooded with her children's gore; till, last,
Lest all trace of her wild brood should be lost,
She warmed the smoking stream to other life
In human form; whence sprang a race, of Gods
Contemptuous, prone to violence and lust
Of strife, and bloody-minded, born from blood.

VII. This from his height with grief great Saturn's son
Beheld; and, mindful of the banquet foul
That spread Lycaon's table—(horror yet

New, and by fame to vulgar ears untold),—
Conceived immortal wrath, and worthy Jove.
The Gods, to council called, in haste attend.
Across the azure vault there lies a way,
Sublime, of milky whiteness, whence its name,
By which Heaven's lords approach the Thunderer's roof
And regal palace. Proud, on either hand,
Stand wide the portals of the nobler sort—
The meaner dwell apart:—adown it look,
Direct, the mansions of the mightiest Gods.
The Capitol of Heaven, if so my tongue
Unblamed may name it. Here their marble thrones
They filled;—great Jove, in place pre-eminent,
On ivory sceptre leaning, thrice and once
Shaking the awful honours of his head,
Rocked Earth, and Sea, and Heaven; and in dread tones
Indignant spake the wrath that stirred his soul.
"Never, O Gods, felt I more nearly touched
"The empire of the world:—no, not when all
"The Giant-brood their hundred serpent-arms
"Upreared to capture Heaven. No puny foes
"They strove: but still a faction, and alone,
"For their own cause of warfare. Now, the race
"Of mortals, wheresoever Nereus roars
"Around the Earth, must perish. By Hell's streams
"Which subterraneous lave the Stygian groves
"I swear,—since vain all remedies, all tried,—
"This ulcer must by steel be deep-excised,
"Lest spreading it corrupt the parts sincere.
"My Demi-gods alone, my rustic Nymphs,
"My Satyrs, Fauns, and Silvans mountain-nursed,—

"Not worthy yet of Heaven's more honoured seats,—
"May hold, in peace, their earthly haunts assigned.
"Else, think, ye Gods, how long would these be safe,
"When thus, more savage than his savage kind,
"Lycaon's bloody treachery dares assail
"Even me, who wield the bolts that shake the world,
"And rule supreme and sovereign of ye all?"
He paused; and from the Gods indignant rose
Loud murmurs, swelling into hot demand
Of judgment on the criminal. Not less,—
When late an impious traitor-band conspired
To drown in Cæsar's blood the name of Rome,—
With such dire ruin threatened, all mankind
Confounded stood, and horror shook the world.
Nor then, Augustus, was Rome's loyalty
More grateful to thy soul, than now to Jove
The sympathy of heaven. But not the less
With glance and gesture of command he checked
The growing clamour, and, when silence hushed
The reverent Gods, the silence broke anew.
"He pays, ere now, his crime—dismiss that care;
"But what that crime, and what its doom, attend
"And learn. Of man's condition to the skies
"Report came, infamous: which to disprove
"Still hoping, from Olympus down to Earth
"My way I took, and, putting off the God,
"Disguised in human semblance walked the world.
"'Twere long to tell what ills I found, more foul
"Than Fame herself had painted. I had passed
"By Mænalus, dread haunt of savage beasts,
"Cyllenus, and Lycæus' wind-swept pines,

"Till darkening eve closed round me at the gate
"Of Arcady's inhospitable king.
"My godlike rank declared, the people thronged
"Adoring: but Lycaon mocked their faith.
"'Soon will we prove,' he scoffed, 'beyond all doubt,
"'If this our guest or God or Mortal be.'
"First, while I sleep he plans with sudden blow
"My murder,—meet experiment of truth!
"Nor this alone. A hostage, whom he held
"Pledge of Molossian faith, with ruthless hand
"He slaughtered, and his limbs, yet quivering, thrust
"Part into seething caldrons, part on spits,
"To boil or roast, and heaped with both the board.
"Then burst my flames avenging, whelming all
"In ruin, house and household-Gods, of such
"A lord well worthy. Terror-struck he fled,
"And through the silence of the distant plains
"Wild howling, vainly strove for human voice.
"His maddened soul his form infects:—his arms
"To legs are changed, his robes to shaggy hide;—
"Glutting on helpless flocks his ancient lust
"Of blood, a wolf he prowls,—retaining still
"Some traces of his earlier self,—the same
"Grey fell of hair—the red fierce glare of eye
"And savage mouth,—alike in beast and man!

VIII. "So fell one house:—but not one house alone
"Has merited to fall. O'er all the earth
"Reigns the dire fury,—as though men had sworn
"One bloody league of crime. So let them pay
"The penalty deserved. Their doom is passed!"

He spake :—and Heaven with voice and nod approved
The fiat, urging the offended Sire
To vengeance. Yet not grievous less to all
Seemed Man's extinction :—and "What fate," they ask,
"Awaits unpeopled Earth?" "What hands shall heap
"With incense now their shrines?" "Must savage beasts
"With tooth and claw exterminate mankind?"—
Questions like these the Father bade their minds
Dismiss undoubting :—His the future care
By some creation marvellous to fill
Earth with a better race, unlike the old :—
And brandished now the awful bolts, to blast
The world : yet paused, lest sacred Æther's self
Should kindle, traversed by so many fires,
And Earth's long axis burst in quenchless flame :—
Remembering how the Fates had told the time
Must come when Land, and Sea, and Heaven, shall burn,
And all the World's huge mass be fused in fire.
So lays he by his weapons Cyclop-forged,
And plans a different doom :—to loose the clouds
At once o'er all the heaven, and whelm mankind
Beneath the waters,—Aquilo in caves
Æolian fettering, with all blasts that clear
The clouded skies, and bidding Notus blow
Unchained. Forth Notus leaped, with dripping wings ;
His face in pitchy darkness veiled,—his beard
Heavy with showers ;—from his white locks profuse
The rain-floods poured ;—his brow with mist was wreathed,
And from his robes and pinions dropped the dew.
With his broad hand the rack he pressed, and down
The floods rushed resonant ;—all Æther shed

One dense dark shower ;—while Juno's messenger,
The many-coloured Iris, all her drops
Collects, and with fresh moisture feeds the clouds.
Waste lie the waving fields,—the farmer's hope
Is marred,—and all the long year's labour lost.
Nor from his heaven alone Jove storms :—below
His Ocean-Brother lends auxiliar waves,
And summons all his streams. His streams attend.
To whom—" No time is now for lengthened charge !
" Pour forth," he cries, " your powers ! fling wide your gates !
" This is your task : and, all impediment
" O'erthrowing, give the reins to all your floods ! "
He spake—and these, returning, straight unsealed
Their fountains, and across the plains with course
Unbridled swept. He with his trident smote
The Earth, who, yawning to the shock, disclosed
Her central springs. From all their channels freed,
Over the open fields the rivers rush,
Herbs, trees, beasts, men, their dwellings, and the fanes
Of Gods, with all their altars, in one whirl
Of ruin whelmed. If any house yet stood
Unwrecked, what boot ? when o'er its roof the wave
Surged higher, and its turrets 'neath the swell
Tottered submerged. And now of land and sea
Distinction quite was lost. All, over all,
One Ocean rolled,—an Ocean without shore !
While yet the flood was deepening, to the hills
Some fly,—some, huddled into boat or raft,
Row, where but now they ploughed :—steering o'er fields
Of corn, and roofs of buried farms, among
Strange fishes, lost amidst the elm-tree tops,

Anchoring perchance in meadow green, or where
Some vineyard grates with hidden poles the keel.
Where fed the nimble goat, huge seals disport
Their bulk unwieldy: underneath the flood,
Groves, houses, towns, the wondering Nereids view.
Amid the woods, perplexed, the dolphins stray,
Jostling the boughs of loftiest oaks. The wolf
Swims with the flock. Here floats the tiger; there
The tawny lion. Little now avails
The boar his fiery strength;—the o'ermastered stag
His swiftness; even the wandering birds, worn out
In the vain quest of land and resting-place,
Let fall their weary wings, and strew the waves.
And now the unbridled licence of the flood
Had drowned the hills, and o'er the mountain-peaks
Strange billows dashed. Of men upon the waves
Most weltered; while the few whom these had spared,
By lingering famine wasted, pined and died.
Betwixt Aonia and the Actæan fields
Lies Phocis, fruitful land while land it was;
Now a wide waste of waters, and mere part
Of Ocean; whence a mount, Parnassus hight,
With cloven crest, above the clouds aspires
To heaven, sole summit unsubmerged. To this
Drifted Deucalion's bark—himself and spouse
Its only freight. Quick landing, they adore
The Nymph Corycian and all Deities
Who haunt the steep, and Themis, awful power,
Disclosing there the mandates of the Fates.
Than he no better, juster man had lived;
Than she no woman holier. And now, Jove,

Seeing the world with one wide lake o'erspread,
And of such countless myriads left alive
Of either sex but one, both innocent
Alike, and both observant of the Gods,
Dispersed the clouds, and drave the showers, and bade
Earth look once more on Heaven, and Heaven on Earth.
Nor longer Ocean's wrath endured. Aside
Neptune his trident lays, and smooths his waves,
And calls cærulean Triton, rearing o'er
The deep his scale-armed back, and bids him fill
His sounding shell, and, with quick signal, call
The waters to their place. The hollow trump,
Sinuous, expanding, gradual, as it wreathes,
He takes—the trump which, in mid ocean filled,
Loud echoes to the shores of either Sun—
And lifts it to his streaming beard, and blows
The summons of return, wide heard by all
The waters spread o'er earth and sea, and, heard,
Obeyed. The sea its shores, the stream its bed
Resumes, the floods subside, the peaks emerge,
The lesser hills peep out, and, as the wave
Recedes, the surface grows ; the forests, last,
Long-drowned, their heads uprear, despoiled and foul
With lingering slime, above a world restored.
But o'er the desolate waste, untenanted,
With silence sad, Deucalion gazed, and thus,
Not without tears, to Pyrrha spake :—" O thou,
" My sister sole, sole wife, sole woman left,
" Joined erst by birth, and race, and wedlock-bond ;
" Joined now by common jeopardy,—we twain,
" Where'er yon Sun, rising or setting, shines,

"Are all Earth's people; Ocean shrouds the rest.
"Nor hold we yet our lives secure; those clouds
"Have not yet lost their terrors. Oh! but think,
"If thee alone the Fates had spared, what lot,
"Me losing, had been thine! How hadst thou borne
"Alone thy fears? what comfort for thy grief
"Couldst hope? For I, believe me, if the wave
"Had whelmed thee, wife beloved, in that same wave
"Following had whelmed myself! Oh, that I now
"That art paternal knew, to people fresh
"The Earth, and give to plastic clay a soul!
"Now in us twain alone remains the race
"Of mortals—so the Gods have willed. We two
"Survive, the sole example of Mankind."
Weeping he spoke, she heard. Recourse to Heaven
Alone is left,—an oracle for guide.
Together to Cephisus' stream they haste,—
Still turbid, though its wonted bed once more
It keeps,—and with its sacred waters lave
Their brows and robes, ere yet their steps approach
The awful Goddess' shrine,—fane now deformed
With moss,—and altars whence no flame ascends.
Before its threshold-step the couple fall
Prostrate, and print with reverent kiss the stone.
And "Oh," they say, "if ever prayer sincere
"Had power to bend or win the Gods, or soothe
"The wrath of Heaven,—tell, Goddess dread, what art
"May mend this ruin of our race, and, kind
"As powerful, aid us in our sore distress!"
Then, not unmoved, the Goddess spake—"Depart
"My shrine, and, with veiled head and vest ungirt,

"Behind you fling your mighty Mother's bones!"
Silent and stunned they heard. But Pyrrha first
Broke the long pause :—she cannot execute
Such hest, imploring pardon if she shrinks
And trembles by such sacrilege to vex
A parent's honoured shade. But, pondering long
The hidden meaning of the oracular voice,
Dark with mysterious phrase, Prometheus' son
Some comfort spies, and, cheerful, to the child
Of Epimetheus—"Or my judgment fails,
"Or this mysterious bidding of the Gods
"May well be done—for Heaven commands no crime.
"Our mighty Mother is the Earth :—these stones
"Upon her surface strewn the Goddess calls,
"Methinks, her bones—'tis these she bids us fling."
He spoke, and Pyrrha half persuaded heard
The comment plausible,—though hope in both
Was faint, and faith yet lacked in Heaven's behest.
But what the harm in trying?—They descend
The mount, and, with veiled head and vest ungirt,
Behind them, as commanded, fling the stones.
And lo!—a tale past credence, did not all
Antiquity attest it true,—the stones
Their natural rigour lose, by slow degrees
Softening, and softening into form; and grow,
And swell with milder nature, and assume
Rude semblance of a human shape, not yet
Distinct, but like some statue new-conceived
And half expressed in marble. What they had
Of moist or earthy in their substance, turns
To flesh :—what solid and inflexible

Forms into bones :—their veins as veins remain :—
Till, in brief time, and by the Immortals' grace,
The man-tossed pebbles live and stand up men,
And women from the woman's cast revive.
So sprang our hard enduring race, which speaks
Its origin—fit fruit of such a stock.

IX. All other life in various shapes the Earth
Spontaneous bare, soon as the Sun had kissed
Her bosom yet undried, and mud and marsh
Stirred into ferment :—and all seeds of things,
As in some mother's womb, beneath the soil
Nutritious warmed, waxed numberless, and rose
Matured to shape. As, when the seven-mouthed Nile
From the soaked fields withdraws his flood, and rolls
Betwixt his wonted banks, and Summer's rays
On the fresh slime beam kindling, countless forms
Of life beneath his share the ploughman finds,
Wondering—some scarce advanced beyond the stage
Of first conception,—lacking some this limb
Or that, imperfect ;—while, in some, half lives,
Half drags unborn, nor disengaged from earth.
For Heat and Moisture, duly mixed, conceive
And generate all things. Fire and Water, foes
By nature, with concordant discord breed
Embracing, all-creative vaporous warmth.
And thus when Earth, yet with the recent flood
From all her pores exuding, felt the glow
Of Heaven's returning sun, unnumbered kinds
Of life she uttered—some in ancient form
Renewed, and some in strange and monstrous shape.

Then first—abhorrent of her fruit—she bore
Huge Python, serpent-prodigy, the dread
Of the new world, o'er half the mountain's side
Enormous coiled. But him the Archer-God
With all his quiver's store of shafts, untried
Till now on aught save deer or nimble goat,
Smote to the death, and from a thousand wounds
Drained the black torrent of his poisonous gore :—
And, that the memory of the deed might live
Through after-time, his famous festival
And Pythian contest, from the monster's name
So called, ordained :—where, of the rival youth,
Whoso in strength of hand or speed of foot,
Or skill to guide the car surpassed, went crowned
With oaken chaplet : for the laurel yet
Was not, and Phœbus from what tree he would
Plucked garland for his brow and streaming hair.

X. Peneïan Daphne was the earliest flame
Of Phœbus, not chance-kindled, but by spite
Of angered Cupid. Him the Delian, flushed
With Python's slaughter, found, his bow with string
Elastic bending, and, "What, wanton Boy,"
He cried, "hast thou to do with manly arms,
"More fitting hands like mine, who know to strike
"With certain wound or beast or foe,—who smote
"But now that monstrous snake whose poisonous coil
"Oppressed so many acres? For *thy* grasp
"Enough the torch, some petty fire of love
"To kindle; to *my* hands *my* weapons leave!"
To whom the child of Venus—"Do thy darts

"Strike all, O Phœbus? Then let mine strike thee!
"And if all else confess thy aim,—thou mine,—
"Mine be the greater glory!" With the word
He shook his wings, and shot through air, and stood,
Malicious, on Parnassus' leafy top,
And from his quiver drew two shafts, of force
Distinct, one tipped with love, and one with hate,—
The first with golden barb acute, the next
Blunted with lead. With this the Maiden's breast
He struck, with that the Day-God, through and through
Transfixed. At once one loves; the other loathes
A lover's name. 'Mid forest-shades the lair
Of captive beasts despoiling, emulous
Of Phœbe, Goddess chaste, her locks untressed
Artless, and but with virgin-fillet bound:
Nor lacking suitors, spurning all, untamed,
Unwon, she traverses the woods, nor cares
To know what Hymen, love, or wedlock mean.
Oft urged her sire his natural right. "I claim
"A son-in-law, my daughter! Child, I claim
"Grandchildren of thee! But the very thought
Of marriage-rite and torch was crime; the name
Alone suffused her cheeks. Around his neck
She flung her fondling arms, and "O, my sire,
"Best, kindest, dearest, grant me still to live
"Perpetual virgin!—Jove no less allowed
"To Dian's prayer." The unwilling sire was won:
But vain the maiden's hope; her charms forbade
Her wish, and beauty's self denied the vow.
For Phœbus seeing, loves, and loving, hopes,
'Spite of his own oracular foresight, blind;

And, as light stubble kindles, when the ears
Are garnered—or dry hedge, with careless spark
Of traveller's torch, too nigh approached, or left
Smouldering, at early morn's departure, bursts
In flame—so sudden burned the God, and fed
With hope a love undestined to success.
If beauteous thus her locks dishevelled flow,
What charms were theirs when braided! How those eyes
Flash, like to stars! Such lips; ah! who can see
Content alone with seeing? Every grace
Of hand, and arm, wellnigh to shoulder bared,
Argues unseen perfection. Light as air
She flies, and deaf to his recalling prayers.
"Oh stay! oh Maiden, stay! No foe pursues
"Thy footsteps. Let the lamb the wolf, the deer
"The lion fly, or trembling doves the kite,
"Their natural foes—'tis love that follows thee!
"Ah Heaven! if thou shouldst fall, or thorns should wound
"Those dainty limbs—and I the cause! Ah! see
"How rough thy path! If thou *must* fly, yet fly
"Less wildly, while less wildly I pursue!
"Learn who it is entreats thy love! No boor,
"No shepherd I—no herdsman sues thee, rough
"And brutish as his charge. Thy ignorance flies
"It knows not whom, unreasoning. Mine the steep
"Of Delphos,—Claros,—Tenedos,—the realms
"Of Patara. My sire is Jove. My voice
"Reveals what was, and is, and is to come.
"Mine music, wedded to immortal song!
"My shaft is sure—surest save one, whose barb
"Stings now my inmost soul. Mine too the fame

" Of medicine. Me a grateful world surnames
" 'The Healer:' and the virtues of all herbs
" I know: alas! that never one of all
" Hath power on love! and all the arts which help
" All others, fail to help their lord alone!"
And more he would have spoken, but the Maid,
Unheeding, fled alarmed the unfinished speech,—
Even then how fair! The meeting breezes flung
Backward her streaming hair, and swelled and tossed
Her robes, revealing every charm of shape
By flight enhanced. Nor longer wastes the God
His amorous entreaties,—passion-spurred,
And urging with all speed the headlong chase.
As when the greyhound o'er the level plain
Pursues the hare,—both speeding, one for prey
And one for life,—as nearer yet he wins
And nearer,—holds her now for sure,—and close
With eager muzzle pants;—she, knowing scarce
If she be ta'en or not, with hair-breadth turn
Baffling the gripe, one moment yet the fangs
Escapes,—so fared it with these twain:—the God
To speed by passion urged, the Maid by fear.
But still the swifter he, to whom love lends
His wings. No respite! On her steps he gains,
Till, wellnigh in his grasp, upon her locks
She feels his hot breath play. With failing force
She reels, and, deathly-pale, to farther flight
Unequal, to paternal Peneus' flood
Gasps out her prayer.—" O Father, if thy streams
" Have aught of godlike power, protect me now!
" Or yawn, thou Mother-Earth, and hide or change

"The form whose fairness works me all this woe!"
Scarce uttered was the wish, when all her limbs
A sudden torpor seizes:—filmy bark
O'erspreads her bosom's snow; her locks to leaves,
Her arms to boughs expand; the foot, but late
So fleet, in earth fast-rooted strikes; her head
In foliage waves,—sole beauty left her now.
Yet even this shape the Godhead loves:—a pulse
In the new stem seems yet beneath his hand
To beat. With arms embracing, on the trunk
He prints a kiss, and from his kiss the trunk
Appears even yet to shrink. "And if," he cries,
"Thou canst not now my consort be, at least
"My tree thou *shalt* be! Still thy leaves shall crown
"My locks, my lyre, my quiver. Thine the brows
"Of Latium's lords to wreathe, what time the voice
"Of Rome salutes the triumph, and the pomp
"Of long procession scales the Capitol.
"Before the gates Augustan shalt thou stand
"Their hallowed guardian, high amid thy boughs
"Bearing the crown to civic merit due:—
"And, as my front with locks that know no steel
"Is ever youthful, ever be thine own
"Thus verdant, with the changing year unchanged!"
So Pæan:—and the new-born Laurel bowed
Her leafy head, and signified assent.

XI. Lapped in Thessalia's forest-mantled hills
Lies the fair vale of Tempe:—down the gorge,
O'ercanopied with groves, old Peneus rolls
From Pindus' foot his waters to the sea,

Wreathing the woods with mist of silvery spray,
And resonant, through many a league around,
With many a fall. There, in the caverned rock
That makes his palace-home, the River-God
Sits sovereign o'er the stream that bears his name
And all its haunting Nymphs. And thither throng
The brother-Powers of all the neighbour-floods,
Doubtful or to congratulate or condole
The parent's hap :—Spercheüs, poplar-crowned,—
Enipeus turbulent, Apidanus
Hoary with age, and smooth Amphrysus came,
And Æas, and the rest, that lead their waves,
Weary with many wanderings, to the sea.
One only came not—Inachus ; whom grief
Held absent, in his cave's recess, with tears
His flood augmenting, mourning for his child,
His Io, lost, nor knowing if she lives
Or no,—but in the failure of all search
Fearing the worst. Her from her father's streams
Returning Jupiter had met, and, fired
With love,—" O Maiden, worthy Jove," he cried,
" Ordained some happy lord to bless, yon grove "
(The grove he showed) " invites thee to its shade,
" While yet the noontide sun too fiercely glares.
" Or, if thou fear'st, alone, the risk to rouse
" Some savage inmate from its lair, a God
" Shall guide and guard thee through its glades, a God
" Of no mean rank, nor less than He whose hand
" The sceptre wields, and hurls the bolts of Heaven !
" Nay—fly me not ! " But fast she fled, and far
Past Lerna's pasture, and beyond the fields

Of wooded Lirce,—when the God with veil
Of sudden darkness shrouded all the face
Of earth,—and checked her flight,—and wrought his will.
Nor long ere from her height on middle earth
Juno looked down,—much marvelling to behold
Clouds, as of night, usurp on noon. No fog
Or mist of marshy stream or reeking fen
Is there. At once her searching glances seek
Her lord, ere now too oft unfaithful proved.
She finds him not in Heaven.—"Or I am wrong,
"Or wronged!" she cries, and from the skies at once
Shoots down to earth, and bids the clouds disperse.
Prescient of her approach, the God transforms
Into a heifer's shape the maid, still fair
Even in such form. Not Juno's self her grace,
Unwilling, can deny:—and "whose?" and "whence?"
And "from what herd?"—as ignorant of the truth,—
She asks. He from the earth asserts her sprung,
To check more question of her race. She prays
The creature for a boon. Hard strait for Jove!
Or cruel, thus to bind his love a thrall,
Or, this refused, suspected. Shame the one,
The other Love dissuades;—and Love had Shame
O'ermastered:—but the partner of his blood
And throne, denied so slight a gift, might deem
The heifer other than the heifer seemed.
Nor yet the granted boon entirely calms
The Goddess' soul:—still doubts she Jove, nor holds
His falsehood beyond fear, till to the charge
Of Argus is the hapless Io given,—
Argus, Aristor's son, around whose head

A hundred eyes were set, whereof but two
Slept at one time, and left the rest on guard.
Stand how he would, he watched; and Io still
Was visible, behind him or before:
By day at large,—at nightfall to the stall
Shackled with halter undeserved,—her food
The leaves of arbutus, and bitter herbs,—
Her bed the ground,—not always soft with grass,—
Her drink the stream,—not always clear. With arms
Suppliant outstretched would she her guardian move,—
Alas! no arms she has! or, would she sue
In words for pity,—lowings rude are all
Her language, sounds which terrify herself
With her own voice. By the loved banks she strays
Of Inachus, her childhood's happy haunt,
And in the stream strange horns reflected views,
Back-shuddering at the sight. The Naiads see
And know her not:—nor Inachus himself
Can recognise his child,—though close her sire
She follows—close her sister-band,—and courts
Their praise, and joys to feel their fondling hands.
Some gathered herbs her father proffers—mute,
She licks and wets with tears his honoured palm,
And longs for words to ask his aid, and tell
Her name, her sorrows. All she can—her hoof,
Unskilful, in the sand contrives to trace
Some letters rude, which hint the wretched tale
Of this her form transformed. Upon her neck
Falls Inachus, with bitter cry—"Ah! me
"Unhappy! me unhappy! so to find
"My child, so sought! A lighter grief hadst thou,

"My daughter, been, unfound! who hast no words
"To answer mine, but only with big sighs
"And inarticulate lowings canst reply!
"Alas for me! who thought to deck ere now
"Duly thy bridal-bower, and hoped to greet
"Thy spouse, and nurse thy children on my knees!
"Ah Heaven! what spouse must now, what child be thine
"Unnatural! Why hath Fate denied such grief
"As this by death to cure? My godhead's self
"Becomes my curse: and Hades' portals barred
"To me, but bar me evermore from peace!"
But Argus saw, and heard the wail, and far
Away to other pastures hurrying drove
The daughter from her father torn,—and sate
At distance, posted on a mountain-top
Commanding watchful all the region round.

XII. But now the Sovereign of the Gods no more
Endured her wrongs, and, summoning his son,
Hermes, the lucent Pleiad's child, with doom
Of death to Argus charged him. Instant down
To earth he sped, with ankles winged, and brow
With cap of swiftness crowned, and in his hand
The wand somniferous:—those he laid aside
Soon as he lighted down, but with the last
Drove, shepherd-wise, a flock,—stolen, as he passed,
From some unguarded fold,—with pipings sweet
Of oaten-reed. And Argus, with the charm
Of that new music caught, cried, "Whosoe'er
"Thou art, rest here awhile, and on this rock
"Sit with me. Grass more tender for thy sheep

" Thou findest nowhere, or more grateful shade."
Unpressed Mercurius sate, and with much talk
And pleasant wore the waning day, and strove
With lulling strain of his compacted reeds
To win to sleep those watchful eyes. But he
Withstood the insidious influence, and, though some
Yield of his eyes, enough to watch resist.
And—for the invention of the pipe was new—
What chance, he asks, its vocal charm revealed?

XIII. To him the God. " Amid Arcadia's hills
" A Naiad, famed o'er all Nonacria's bands
" Of Hamadryads, dwelt—Syrinx her name;—
" Oft sued in vain by Satyrs, and such Gods
" As haunt those shady groves and fruitful fields.
" Sworn votary of Ortygian Artemis,
" In all observance chaste; and so in form
" And garb the Goddess matching, that their bows
" Alone—one golden, one of simple horn—
" Served for distinction 'twixt them, nor even thus
" Served always sure. Her from Lycæus' steep
" Descending, Pan, with piny garland crowned,
" Beheld, and thus addressed."—Here paused the song,
Unneeding now to add how Syrinx spurned
His suit, and, flying, reached the sandy banks
Of Ladon's stream, and, as his waves forbade
Her farther flight, implored the Water-Nymphs,
Her sisters, to transform her; or how Pan,
Thinking to clasp his Syrinx, clasped alone
A sheaf of marsh-grown reeds; and while he sighed,
Thus balked, amid them rose a wind, and waked

Low murmurs, like a wailing woman's voice.
And with its sweetness moved,—"At least," he cried,
"This union with thee will I have!"—and how
Thenceforth the unequal reeds, with wax conjoined,
Melodious, bore the maiden's name.—All this
Mercurius left unsung; for, lo! the lids
O'er all the eyes of Argus drooped, and closed
Their orbs in slumber. With the magic wand
Waved silent round the languid head, the spell
He deepens; and then, swift, with crescent-blade,
Smites where the head and neck conjoin, and flings
Adown the bleeding corpse, and floods the crag
With gore. So Argus fell; so waned at once
The light which filled so many eyes; one night
Closed all the hundred. But Saturnia's care
Later renewed their fires, and bade them shine,
Gem-like, amid her peacock's radiant plumes.

XIV. But instant on the deed her wrath outblazed,
Ungoverned, and with maddening fury stung,
She drave the hated harlot of her lord,
Distracted with blind terrors, wandering wide
O'er Earth. Thy banks, old Nile, gave pause at last
To so much sorrow. By thy wave she knelt
As best she could; and lifting up to Heaven
What countenance she had, with groans and tears,
And lowings pitiful, to Jove preferred
Her plaint; and, inarticulate, prayed release
From torment. Jove, with fondling arms around
His Juno flung, implores her grace: "No fear,"
He cries, "henceforth be thine! no future wrong

"Dread from this source!" he said, and bade the Styx
The solemn oath attest. Saturnia calms
Her wrath; and Io takes her wonted form,
Once more as erst she was. The skin grows smooth,
The horns abate, the eye's wide orb contracts,
The ample mouth grows less, shoulders and hands
Return; the hoof, to natural fingers split,
Divides; nor of the heifer aught remains
Save whiteness fair of skin. Upon two feet
Alone, erect the Woman stands; her voice
Half hesitating yet to prove; nor sure
What sound may follow, trembling, tries her tongue.
Her now the white-robed race of Nile adores—
A Goddess highest honoured. Epaphus,
Fruit in due season of the Thunderer's love,
Like rites enjoys, and by his mother's fane
His own, associate, rears. Of equal years,
And nature like to him, was Phaëton,
Apollo's child, whom once, with boastful tongue,
Vaunting his birth divine, and claiming rank
Superior, the Inachian checked. "Right well,"
He cried, "thy mother's lesson hast thou learned,
"Pluming thyself upon such fabled Sire!"
Shame, anger flushed his cheeks. To Clymene
He bears the insult; and, "O mother mine!
"Be this thy bitterest pang that I, thy son—
"Too free ere now of hand and hot of blood—
"Was answerless. Ah, shame of shames! to hear
"Such taunt, nor instant dare confute the lie!
"But thou, if such a Sire indeed be mine,
"Give me to prove my birth, and justify

"The claim to kin with Gods!" He said, and clasped
Her neck, imploring her by all dear heads—
Her own, her lord's, her daughters'—to assure
His questioned parentage. Moved, whether most
By such entreaty or by ire at shame
Imputed to herself, to Heaven she lifts
Her arms, and fronting straight the Sun: "I swear,"
She cries, "by yonder orb of radiant fire,
"Which sees, and hears me speak, *His* son thou art
"Whom there thou seest—the God who guides the World!
"If I speak false, may never more his light
"Beam on me, and be this my latest day!
"Nor hard the task for thee to seek and reach
"The palace of thy Sire. Not far beyond
"Our borders lies the realm which gives him birth.
"Go, if thou wilt, and ask the God himself!"
Glad at his mother's speech, up springs the youth,
And, proud, in thought assumes the God, and leaves
Behind his kindred Æthiops and the sons
Of India, to heaven's fiercest rays exposed;
And, eager, seeks the birthplace of his Sire.

THE

METAMORPHOSES

OF

PUBLIUS OVIDIUS NASO

BOOK II.

THE METAMORPHOSES.

BOOK II.

I. Sublime on lofty columns, bright with gold
And fiery carbuncle, its roof inlaid
With ivory, rose the Palace of the Sun,
Approached by folding gates with silver sheen
Radiant; material priceless,—yet less prized
For its own worth than what the cunning head
Of Mulciber thereon had wrought,—the globe
Of Earth,—the Seas that wash it round,—the Skies
That overhang it. 'Mid the waters played
Their Gods cærulean. Triton with his horn
Was there, and Proteus of the shifting shape,
And old Ægeon, curbing with firm hand
The monsters of the deep. Her Nereids there
Round Doris sported, seeming, some to swim,
Some on the rocks their tresses green to dry,
Some dolphin-borne to ride; nor all in face
The same, nor different;—so should sisters be.
Earth showed her men, and towns, and woods, and beasts,
And streams, and Nymphs, and rural Deities:

And over all the mimic Heaven was bright
With the twelve Zodiac signs, on either valve
Of the great portal figured,—six on each.
And now the child of Clymene the steep
Ascending, passed the threshold of his Sire,
Yet unassured, and towards the Godhead bent
His steps, yet far off stood, nor nearer bore
The dazzling radiance. Clad in flowing robe
Of purple, on a throne of state, that shone
Crusted with beryl, Phœbus sate. To right
And left were ranged the Days, and Months, and Years,
And Ages, and the Hours, with each its space
Allotted equal. Spring, with flowery crown
Round his young brows,—and Summer, lightly clad,
With wreath of odorous spices,—Autumn, stained
With juice of trodden wine-press,—and the head
Of Winter, white with frost and age,—were there.
Himself sits midmost:—nor escapes his eye
All-seeing long the youth, with wondering awe
Such marvels viewing:—and "What brings thee here,
"My offspring,—for I recognise thee such,—
"What wouldst thou of me?" asks the God. To whom
The youth—"O common light of all the world,
"Phœbus, my Sire, if by such name I dare
"Address thee, nor hath Clymene her shame
"With falsehood sought to veil,—give me, I pray,
"Some pledge whereby henceforth I may be known
"Thy son indeed, and all this doubt be cleared!"
He said—and straight the Godhead laid aside
The dazzling glories of his brow, and bade
Approach, and folded in his arms his child,

And—" O well worthy to be owned my Son,"
He said, " thy Mother's tale was truth. To still
" All question, ask what boon thou wilt :—ere asked
" I grant it thee. By Styx, dread oath of Gods,
" Which never yet these rays illumed, I swear !"
Scarce uttered was the promise, when the youth
Demands his father's car, and, for one day,
The rein and guidance of its wingèd steeds.
Then rued the God his oath, and thrice and once
Shaking his radiant head, " Alas ! thy speech
" Proves mine too rash !" he cried,—" Would yet my boon
" I could deny, for thou the one sole thing
" Hast asked I would not grant thee. O my son,
" Let me dissuade, if not refuse. Thy wish
" Is fraught with peril ! 'Tis no little thing
" Thou seek'st, my Phaëton ! a trust for heads
" And years like thine unfitting. Mortal, thou
" Immortal function dar'st affect, and more
" Than all Heaven's Gods may venture. Whatsoe'er
" His confidence, none save myself can guide
" That fiery chariot, task for Jove himself,
" Whose terrible right hand the thunder wields,
" Too hard,—and where is greater strength than Jove's ?
" Steep is the track at starting, even for steeds
" Fresh with the morn no easy climb :—then lies
" High across central Heaven, whence I,—even I,—
" On Earth and Sea not without fear look down :
" Then sheer again descends,—sure hand and strong
" Demanding, where old Tethys' self, whose waves
" Beneath receive me, dreads some day to see
" My headlong fall. Add, that the heavens, around

" In ceaseless revolution borne, attract
" And with them drag in dizzy whirl the stars.
" Adverse to these my course. All else they sweep
" With them,—save me. Against the rapid rush
" Of the World I hold my way. But *thou*—suppose
" The chariot thine—couldst *thou* unswerving keep
" The path 'twixt either Pole, or stem undazed
" The whirl of Heaven? Dost dream that journey winds
" By groves, and towns, and fanes of Gods with gifts
" Resplendent? Through what perils, 'mid what forms
" Of monsters lies it! Shouldst thou keep the track
" Perchance, nor deviate aught, still must thou tempt
" The horns of hostile Taurus, and the shafts
" Of that Thessalian archer, Leo's jaws
" Terrific, Scorpio's cruel arms around
" Groping for prey, and Cancer's claw which grasps
" With backward clutch its spoil!—Nor light the task
" That team to curb, impetuous, breathing flame
" From mouth and nostril! Scarce, when warmed, they bear
" My hand, and toss with scornful neck the rein!
" Bethink thee, O my son, nor let thy sire
" With fatal gift undo thee! While thou mayst
" Amend thy suit. Thou wouldst by certain proof
" Assure thy parentage. My grief supplies
" The pledge;—my father's fears the father prove.
" Look on me! Would thy glance my inmost heart
" Could penetrate, and read the sire within!
" Oh! ransack all the treasures of the world,
" Earth, sea, and sky,—choose what thou wilt of all
" Their gifts, nor dread denial! This alone
" Forbear to seek,—false honour—certain bane!

"The boon thou seekest is thy doom, my son!
"Nay, clasp not thus my neck—ah! rash and blind!
"Whate'er thy wish, doubt not, 'tis thine, for Styx
"Hath heard my oath,—but oh, more wisely ask!"
He ended, but the youth his warning scorned,
And urged his boon, and burned to guide the car,
Whereto at length the sire, with what delay
He could, unwilling led him. Vulcan wrought
The chariot:—gold its axle was, its pole
Golden, its wheels gold-tired, with silver spokes:
And from its seat unnumbered chrysolites
Flashed back reflected light. The daring boy
Admiring scans the marvel. And now wide
Aurora, blushing-born, her purple gate,
Wakeful, had flung, and all her roseate halls
Disclosed; and Lucifer the gathered stars
Drove homeward, last himself to leave the skies.
And Phœbus, as he saw the rosy flush
Suffuse the world, and Luna's horns in light
Superior vanish, bade the rapid Hours
Yoke to the car the steeds. The Hours obey
Instant, and from their stalls the coursers lead,
With juice ambrosial nourished, and attach
The harness resonant. With drugs of power
The Sire anoints his offspring's brows, to bear
Unharmed the flames, and round his tresses binds
The radiant crown, and, with deep sighs, too well
Prescient of coming sorrow, speaks. "O son!—
"If thus much of thy father's warning thou
"Canst follow,—spare the lash, and tightly hold
"The rein. My steeds spontaneous fly: thy task

"Will be to check them. Nor directly urge
"Through the five Zones thy way. A path oblique
"Winds curving through the central three. Content
"With these, and shunning either Pole, the track
"Observe, where erst my wheels have marked the road,
"Dispensing equal warmth to Earth and Heaven.
"Nor be thy course too low depressed, nor urged
"Too high aloft, lest Heaven or Earth in flames
"Be wrapped, but safe the midway course pursue.
"Nor towards the Serpent on thy right, nor near
"The Altar on thy left, thy wheel incline:
"At equal distance pass them. What remains
"I trust to Fortune:—may she aid, and more
"Consult thy weal than thou dost! While I speak
"The night hath touched the borders of the west,
"And darkness flies Aurora's face; nor more
"May I delay;—the World demands me! Grasp
"The reins, or—if thy breast may still be moved—
"My counsel take, and not my car, while yet
"Thou mayst, and from this steadfast seat,—more safe
"Than that thy ignorance covets,—see thy Sire
"Fulfil his proper task, and light the World!"
But the hot boy already in the car
Sate mounted, joyous in his grasp to feel
The trusted reins, and to his Sire profuse
Poured his unwelcome thanks. The steeds, meanwhile—
Eous, Pyroëis, Æthon, and the fourth
Phlegon,—with fiery neighings fill the air,
And plunge, impatient of restraint. And now
Tethys, unprescient of her grandson's doom,
Unbars her gates, and gives them way:—the World

Immense is theirs to traverse! Forth they dash
And cleave the opposing clouds, and with fleet wings
Outstrip the blast of Eurus, like themselves
Eastern of birth. Nor failed their sense at once
The lighter load to feel, and car which lacked
Its wonted weight. And, as some bark which starts
Too sparely ballasted, across the deep
Unsteady drives, the chariot now, unpressed
By its due burden, reels and rocks, and seems
As empty to those coursers, quick to snatch
Their liberty. Wild dashing on, they quit
The beaten track, and all control disown.
Cold tremors seize the youth:—no more he knows
Which rein to try, or where his road, though vain
'Twere now, when all command is lost, to know.
Now first those heavenly Oxen burned with heat
Unfelt before, and vainly longed to plunge
Beneath the wave denied them;—and the Snake
Nighest the icy Pole, till now with cold
Inert, and terrible to none, conceived
Strange fury from the rays. Even thou, they say,
Alarmed didst fly, Boötes, slow albeit
Of movement by thy tardy wain delayed.
But when the hapless Phaëton looked down
From Heaven to Earth, so wide, so far below,
Together knocked his knees, and blanched his cheeks,
And darkness, born of too much light, his eyes
Confounded. Would his hand had ne'er essayed
Those steeds to rule! Ah, would he ne'er had won
With fatal prayer this proof of heavenly birth,
Content with Merops for a sire! As drives

Some bark, when Boreas rages, and the helm
The o'ermastered pilot quits, nor hope has more,
Save in his prayers and Gods—so headlong now
The youth is borne. Behind him spreads the tract
Of heaven already passed—before him lies
A wider yet! Both measuring, now with look
Strained to that west he ne'er is doomed to reach—
Now eastward—paralysed in blank despair
He stands—the loose reins idle in the hands
Which neither drop nor manage them—nor knows
By name to call and pacify his steeds.
A place there is in heaven where Scorpio curves
In double bow his arms, and, with spread tail
And claws on either side outstretched, usurps
Space ample for two Signs. When him the Boy
Beheld, black venom sweltering, and with sting
Exasperate threatening wounds and death,—all heart
Failed him, and icy terror numbed his hands,
And from them shook the reins; no sooner felt
Loose floating on those coursers' backs, than wild
They swerve, and masterless through unknown realms
Of air, as impulse urges, bound, and dash
Against fixed orbs of stars, and whirl the car
Through space by track unmarked, and now aloft
They soar, now downward headlong plunge, too close
To Earth. Her brother's steeds beneath her own
Much marvelling Luna sees. The scorching clouds
Begin to smoke. Each loftier prominence
Of Earth takes fire, and flames, and splits, and gapes
In fissures, parched and moistureless. The meads
Turn ashy white, nor leaf nor trunk of tree

Escapes, and drying harvests court the blaze.
Light mischief this, when cities whole with all
Their walls in ruin tumble, and some heap
Of ashes only tells that underneath
A nation lies consumed! Each mount with all
Its forests flames! Flames Athos' height, and thine
Cilician Taurus: Tmolus, Œta, burn,
And Ida, erst for many fountains famed,
Dry now,—and virgin-haunted Helicon,—
And Hæmus, by that name of after-time,
Ægrius, yet unknown. With doubled blaze
Flames Ætna,—and Parnassus' cloven crest,—
Eryx, and Cynthus, Othrys, Rhodope
Now first of snow dismantled, Dindyma,
Mimas, and Mycale, and thou, for rite
Of Bacchus famed, Cithæron. Little now
May Scythia's snows avail her! Caucasus
Flares with the rest:—Ossa and Pindus burn,
And, huger yet, Olympus, and the Alps
Heaven-towering, and the cloud-capped Apennine!
And now, where'er he turns his glance, the Youth
Sees but a world on fire; nor heat so great
Sustains, and, panting, draws each breath of air
Scorching as furnace-blast, and feels the car
Beneath him glow,—with ashes and thick shower
Of fiery fragments choked, and blind with cloud
Of stifling smoke:—nor where he was, or is,
Or goes, can longer tell, but at the will
Of those mad steeds whirls giddy through the skies!
'Twas then, they say, the Æthiop—all his blood
Drawn outward to the surface—first assumed

That darker hue he wears :—then Libya first,
Of all her moisture drained, an arid waste
Became. Then with dishevelled locks the Nymphs
For their lost founts went wailing. Sudden ceased
Bœotian Dirce :—Amymome failed
Her Argives :—and in Ephyre thy wave,
Pirene, gushed no more. Nor rivers, proud
Of widest bank and broadest flood, escaped
The ruin. Tanais in mid-channel smoked,
And aged Peneus, and thy Mysian stream,
Caïcus, and Ismenus swift, and thine,
Arcadian Erymanthus,—Xanthus, doomed
Later again to burn,—thy yellow wave.
Lycormas, and Mæander, pleased to stray
In sportive windings numberless. Burned too
Mygdonian Melas, and Eurotas born
Of Spartan Tænarus,—Euphrates far
By Babylon, Orontes, and the flood
Thermodon downward hurries :—Ganges warmed,
And Phasis, and Danubius. All thy waves
Alpheüs, boiled and bubbled, and thy banks,
Spercheius, glowed. Tagus his golden freight
Rolled melted to the sea. The swans which haunt
Caÿster's banks, and all Mæonian founts
Make famous with their music, in mid-stream
Sickened with heat. To the world's utmost end
Fled Nilus, burying deep in earth his head,
Ne'er since to light restored :—his mouths remain,—
Rivers no more,—mere valleys, dry with dust.
Nor other lot befell that Thracian pair,
Hebrus and Strymon :—nor the western floods

Of Padus, Rhenus, Rhodanus, nor thine,
Old Tiber, by the Fates in after years
Ordained to bear the Masters of the World.
Earth's surface yawns throughout, and piercing light
Illumes all Tartarus, and shakes with fear
Hell's Monarch and his Consort. Ocean shrinks,
And leaves a waste of sand what late was sea;
And rocks jut out, late covered by the waves,
Like islands to the scattered Cyclades
New added. Fishes to the bottom dive,
Nor dare the dolphins more through air to try
Brief flight, and seals uncouth expiring float
Supine upon the deep. In lowest cave
Old Nereus, and his Doris, and their train
Of daughters, trembling hide. Thrice Neptune rears
His angry brow above the wave, and thrice
Withdraws, by heat o'ermastered. At the last
Old Tellus, ocean-girdled,—all her founts
Or dried or in her bosom shrunk,—upraised
Her parching brow, and, shading from her eyes
With outspread hand the glare, and by her fears
Shaken to lesser bulk and lower place
Than erst she held, with gasping accents spake.
"O thou, of Gods the Sovereign! if thy will
"Be thus, and I this fate have merited,
"Why linger yet thy lightnings? If by fire
"I perish, let it be by Thine! my doom
"Will come the easier from Thy hand. The prayer
"Thou seest how scarce my parching lips have strength
"To urge. My brows are scorched! my eyes are seared
"And blind with ashes! Oh! is this the meed

"Of all my faithful duty? But for this
"Have I endured, the long year through, the tooth
"Of plough and gnawing harrow? but for this
"Borne for the herd its pasture, for the race
"Of men my harvests, for the Gods themselves
"Their incense? Say my doom is just;—but what,
"What hath my Brother done? Why thus from Heaven
"More distant shrink the Waters to his rule
"Assigned?—But, if nor He nor I have power
"To move thee, let thy proper Heaven awake
"Thy pity! Look around thee! Either Pole
"Already smokes:—let these but burst in flame,
"And all thy palace topples! Atlas' self,
"Half stifled, scarce the glowing globe sustains!
"If Sea, and Land, and Sky, must perish thus,
"Chaos again confounds us! Rescue yet
"What rests, and in thy mercy help the World!"
She ceased, nor longer bore the heat, nor more
Could utter, and within herself withdrew
Low in her deepest cavern, neighbouring close
On Hades. Then the Sire Omnipotent
Calling all Gods to witness,—and, most, him
Who lent that fatal car,—how ruin threats
The world unless he aid it, to the top
And citadel of Heaven betakes him, whence
He darkens Earth with storm-cloud, and bids roar
The thunder, and the brandished lightning flings:
Though now—so Fate would have it—was at hand
Nor cloud, nor shower, to darken or to drown.
But loud he thunders, and, with right hand high
Uplifted, on the hapless charioteer

Lets fly the bolt of fire, and hurls him down
Headlong at once from car and life, and quells
The fires with fire more potent. Terror strikes
The steeds, and backward bounding from their necks
The yoke they dash, and spurn the broken reins ;—
And here the curb, and here the axle lies,
And separate here the pole, and here the spokes
Of shattered wheels, and here what fragments else
Strewed piecemeal of the car. Down, headlong down
Falls Phaëton, his streaming locks ablaze
With flame, and shoots through air, as seems athwart
The cloudless sky some midnight star to fall
Yet leaves no vacant space. Eridanus,
Far from the land that gave him birth, receives
His corse, and from his face the death-sweat laves.

II. The Hesperian Naiads gave his blackened form
A tomb, and on the stone these lines engraved.
" This is the grave of Phaëton, who strove
" To guide his Father's car; and, if he strove
" In vain, at least in no mean venture failed."
O'erwhelmed with grief that Father veiled, they say,
His head, and left the World—believe who will—
For one whole day without a Sun. The flames
Awful supplied his place :—so came of ill
Some good at least. But Clymene, when grief
With all wild words to such a sorrow due
Had spent its earliest force, forlorn and crazed
Of soul, with careless vest and torn, all Earth
Exploring traversed, in the hope to find
His limbs, or, when that hope grew vain, his bones.

To these, in that far land entombed, at last
She comes, and o'er them broods, and with her tears
Wets, as she reads, the name beloved, and warms
The marble to her bosom pressed. Nor less
His Heliad sisters mourned;—with sobs and tears,—
Vain gifts which Death not heeds,—and hands that beat
Their breasts, and linked around the tomb, by day,
By night, they call the Brother, whose dull ear
No plaint of theirs may reach. Four times the Moon
Her horns fresh filling heard them,—for the wail
From use was custom now:—when, as she bent
To kneel, Phaethusa, eldest born, her feet
Felt stiffen, and Lampetie, at her cry
Starting, took sudden root, and strove in vain
For motion to her aid. The third, her hair
In anguish tearing, tore off leaves! And now
Their legs grow fixed as trunks, their arms as boughs
Extend, and upward round them creeps a bark
That gradual folds the form entire, save yet
The head and mouth that to their mother shrieks
For help. What help is hers to give? Now here,
Now there she rushes, frantic, kissing this
Or that while yet she can, and strives to rend
Their bodies from the clasping bark, and tears
The fresh leaves from their sprouting heads, and sees,
Aghast, red drops as from some wound distil.
And "Ah, forbear!" the sufferer shrieks—"Forbear,
"O mother dear! Our bodies in these trees
"Alone are rent! Farewell!" And o'er the words
Scarce-uttered closed the bark,—and all was still.

III. But yet they weep:—and, in the Sun, their tears
To amber harden, by the clear stream caught
And borne, the gaud and grace of Latian maids.

IV. It chanced partaker of that marvel stood
Cycnus, the son of Sthenelus, who swayed
Liguria's peopled towns,—to Phaëton
By blood maternal linked, but closer yet
By kindred soul:—and, for his loss, had left
His realm;—and all thy grassy banks and groves,
Eridanus, by those new sister-trees
Augmented now, made echo with his plaints.
Sudden his voice pipes shriller, and his head
For hair with feathery down is clad:—his neck
Starts lengthened from his breast:—a pinky film
Joins membranous his fingers:—from his sides
Spread pinions;—from his face a blunted beak
Protrudes. A bird is Cycnus now,—nor dares,
Mindful of that late levin-bolt unjust,
To trust himself to Heaven and Jove, but dwells
In pools and spreading lakes, and, hating fire,
Elects the streams, that hate it too, to haunt.
Meanwhile the Sire of Phaëton apart
Sate, haggard, of all radiance disarrayed,
As when, eclipsed, the Earth he fails; and hates
Himself, and day, and light, and, all his soul
To grief and anger yielding, to the World
Denies his function. "Long enough," he cries,
"From earliest time my lot hath been to know
"No rest, and of my labours see no end,
"No honours reap!—some other hand henceforth

"My car of light may guide :—or, if none such
"Be found, and every God confess the task
"Too high, let Him Himself essay, and so,—
"At least, while yet my reins his hands employ,—
"Lay by the bolts that rob us of our sons,—
"And try the might of those fire-footed steeds,—
"And say if Death be fitting meed for all
"Who fail to rule them!"—So he spake :—but all
The Gods around him thronged, and, with one voice,
Implored him not to plunge in night the world.
Nor Jove himself disdains to justify
His act, and joins the prayer ;—but in such tone
As makes refusal dangerous :—so Kings pray.
And Phœbus now his scattered team, yet wild
With terror, gathers, and with goad and lash
Unsparing quells,—unsparing, for each stroke
Wreaks on their guilty backs his offspring's fate.

V. And next the Sire Almighty round the walls
Of Heaven his circuit makes,—if chance some part
May totter, weakened by those flames. All sound
And strong he finds. Earth views he next, and all
The labours of Mankind. And first his care
His own Arcadia visits. All her founts
He fills, and bids her streams unfearing flow ;
Gives back to Earth her grass—to trees their leaves—
And clothes the injured woods once more with green.
But him, thus busied, a Nonacrian Maid
Encounters, and his bosom fires. Unused
To blend the soft wool's mingling hues, or braid
With various charm her locks ;—a buckle clasped

Her vest, her hair a snowy fillet bound,
Loose-floating else :—and now, with javelin armed
Smooth-polished, now with bow, in Dian's wars
She served, a soldier sworn :—on Mænalus
No Nymph more favoured shared the Goddess' sport.
Favour too soon to fail !—alas ! what good
May long endure ?—The noon but now had passed,
And a cool grove, yet by no axe profaned,
Invited. From her shoulder she unbound
Its weight of arrows, and unbent her bow,
And flung upon the grass her limbs, and lay
Pillowed upon her quiver, with the chase
Weary, and faint. " This chance at least," quoth Jove,
" Juno need never know !—or, should she spy,
" Why, let her rail ! the bliss is worth the price !"
In semblance of Diana's self he comes,
And " Where, O dearest of my train," he cries,
" Hath lain thy sport to-day ?" Prompt to her feet
The Maiden springs—" All hail ! O Goddess dear,
" Greater to me than Jove, though Jove himself
" The avowal hear !"—And Jove *did* hear, and smiled
Thus to himself himself preferred to hear.
And with quick kisses, closer, warmer far
Than virgin-lips should print, to what he asks
All further answer hinders, and declares
Himself in guilty triumph. Woman's strength,
Such as she has, in vain resists,—(hadst thou
That struggle seen, Saturnia, sure thy wrath
Less fierce had burned !)—in vain contends :—who strives,
Or maid or man, successfully with Jove ?
Aloft he soars victorious. She the wood

Detests, and every tree that saw her shame,
And from it hurrying flies, and wellnigh leaves
Forgotten there her bow and quivered darts.
Her, with her maids Dictynna, round the sides
Of Mænalus in all the pride of chase
Sweeping, espies and calls. The call at first
She flies,—Jove yet beneath that form may lurk,—
But by the following Nymphs assured, resumes
Her place amid the band. But ah! how hard
To school the burdened heart, nor let the cheek
Betray its guilty secret! From the ground
Scarcely she dares her glance to raise, nor leads
As erst the chase, and by the Goddess' side
Outstrips her fellows. Silence now, and cheeks
Suffused half tell her shame:—a thousand hints
To all, save spotless maid like Dian, speak:
Her very Nymphs suspect. Nine moons had waxed
And waned, when now the Heavenly Huntress, faint
And languid with her Brother's rays, a grove
Had reached, where bright o'er golden sands a brook
Flowed murmuring down. The spot she praised, and dipped
In the fresh wave her foot, and praised that too,
And "None is here," she cried, "to see:—unrobe
"We all, and cool us in the stream!" The nymphs
Heard gladly and obeyed. One only shrinks
And blushing falters forth excuse. The rest
Surrounding press, and strip her shrinking form,
And with her falling vest her fault betray.
Vainly her hands attempt the evidence
Of guilt to hide. "Depart!" the Goddess cries,
"Nor taint these sacred founts, nor dare again

"This Sisterhood approach!" Long since the truth
The Thunderer's keen-eyed spouse had learned, and long
Fit hour of vengeance watched:—she waits no more:
For Arcas now, of that ill love the fruit,
Was born, to crown her wrong. The sight inflames
Her very soul. "There lacked but this!" she cries,
"This bastard, harlot-born, to publish all
"My shame and Jove's! Yet think not thus to 'scape
"And vaunt, unchanged, the form which too much pleased
"Thyself and that false lord of mine!"—she spoke,
And seized her by the locks that shade her brows,
And bowed her head to Earth. Her arms she strove
Suppliant to raise,—black shaggy hair her arms
O'erspread; her hands, with growth of crooked nails,
The function took of feet: the lips, which Jove
But late had praised, widened with hateful chasm
Of horrid jaws:—and, lest her prayers should claim
His aid, all human speech the Goddess barred,
And, in its stead, a fierce and threatening growl
Bore terror in its sound. The mind alone
Remains unchanged:—even in the Bear *that* still
Is human. With perpetual moans her grief
She vents, and raises all the hands she can
To Heaven, and with dumb gesture bids Jove see
The wrong she cannot speak. The forest, now
Her proper dwelling, frights her. Round the walls
Of her old home, and through the fields once hers,
She wanders, ah! how often by the bay
Of eager hounds back to her rocks pursued!
Poor huntress, by the hunters terrified!
Nor dares, forgetful how her altered form

Secures her, 'mid the woods her sister-bears
To meet, and trembles at each wolf she sees,
Though in that shape her own lost father roamed.

VI. So thrice five years wore on, when Arcas, now
A youth, amid the Erymanthian woods
Pursued the chase, and spread his toils, and fell
Unwitting on his parent's track. The beast
Beheld, nor fled, but seemed to recognise
Her hunter. Wondering, half alarmed, he marked
The strange fixed earnest eyes the unfearing brute
Fixed on him, anxious to approach:—and now
He poised his javelin for the fatal blow,
When Jove forbade the crime, and snatched them both,
Mother and child, aloft through air, and placed
In Heaven, and bade them neighbouring shine as Stars.
Swelled higher then Saturnia's wrath, to see
Her rival with such honour graced; and down
Her way she takes, where hoary Tethys dwells
Beneath the waves, with old Oceanus,—
Powers reverenced by all Gods,—and straight unfolds
Her journey's cause. "Ask ye why I, Heaven's Queen,
"Am here? Another holds my place above!
"Think not I dream! Yourselves shall see, when Night
"In darkness wraps the world, two new-made stars
"Blaze bright aloft—my torment! where the last
"And smallest circle girds the globe. Who now
"Shall shrink to do me wrong, or dread that wrath
"Which profits whom it smites? Proud triumph this!
"Fair trophy for a power like mine to win!
"I turned a woman to a brute—the brute

"A Goddess shines! Such penalty my doom
"Imposes on the guilty! such my power!
"Back let him give her ancient form, and strip
"The beast away, as erst he did from her
"His Argive Io! Nay,—why not at once
"Divorce me from his bed, and place therein
"The strumpet in my room, and boldly boast
"Himself Lycaon's son-in-law?—But ye,
"Who reared me, if your nursling's wrongs have power
"To move your breasts, avenge me, nor receive
"Those seven detested orbs beneath your waves!
"If guerdoned thus adulterous guilt must shine
"In Heaven, oh! here at least the shame reject,
"Nor in your pure depths lave the harlot's head!"

VII. The Ocean-Gods assented. Back to Heaven
The Goddess speeds, in her light chariot, drawn
By painted peacocks,—painted late, what time
Argus was slain;—what time the Raven too,
Loquacious, changed his hue, from snowy plumes
To sable:—he, whose silver wings of yore
Rivalled the whitest stainless dove that flies,
Nor yielded to those watchful birds foredoomed
To save the Capitol, or swans which haunt
The river's bank. His tongue undid him:—this
It was which made him black who once was white.

VIII. Coronis of Larissa was the flower
Of all Hæmonia's maids,—to Phœbus dear
While constant, or not yet inconstant proved:—
But Phœbus' bird her falsehood saw, and bent

Her fault inexorable to disclose
His master sought. His flight the Crow pursued,
Swift, garrulous, inquisitive to learn
His cause of haste; which told,—"Be warned!" she cries,
"Spurn not my counsel! Little good for thee
"This service earns. See what I am, and hear
"What once I was. What made me thus? My truth
"Too faithful was my bane. Long since it was
"That Ericthonius, child who never knew
"A mother's womb, was born. Him Pallas gave
"Shut in a coffer framed of Attic reeds
"In charge to Cecrops' daughters,—virgins three,—
"And bade them safely keep the ark, nor dare
"To look on what it held. I saw, and heard,
"And watched them, in an elm-tree's boughs concealed.
"Two,—Pandrosos and Herse, duly kept
"The Goddess' hest:—but one, Aglauros, mocked
"Her weaker sisters, and untwined the cords
"That bound the chest, and looked within, and saw
"The child, and shuddered at his dragon-feet.
"I told the Goddess of the deed:—and this
"My guerdon was, to forfeit evermore
"Her favour, and below the fowl of Night
"Thenceforth to rank. Let other birds by me
"Be warned, nor, too communicative, earn
"Like doom to mine! 'Ah! but I forced,' thou say'st—
"'Myself upon the Goddess—pressed unasked
"'My service on her.'—To herself then go
"And ask her! Pallas hates me now, but still
"Pallas is just, nor will the truth deny.
"My place of birth was Phocis—who not knows

"The tale?—My Sire Coroneus. Royal race
"Was mine—nay, mock not!—Wealthy suitors sought
"My hand. My beauty was my bane. It chanced
"As on the shore I wandered with slow steps
"Habitual pacing, Ocean's Lord beheld
"And loved me. Weary with unheeded prayers
"To urge his idle suit, with force he tried
"To win me, and pursued. The solid shore
"I left, and fast along the yielding sands
"Fled vainly, calling on all Gods and men
"For aid:—but never mortal heard. A Maid
"Answered a Maid's appeal, and brought me help.
"My arms were raised to Heaven,—sudden my arms
"With plums of ebon hue grew dark. I strove
"My shoulders from my vest to free,—my vest
"Was feathers now, fast-rooted. With my hands
"My bosom bare I tried to beat,—nor hands
"Nor bosom bare now had I:—nor the sands
"More clogged me as I ran:—from off the ground
"I rose, and lightly skimmed through air, and soared
"Minerva's stainless comrade. Ah! what now
"Does that lost boast avail me, when, for crime
"Most horrible to birdlike shape transformed,
"Nyctimene my place and honour holds!

IX. "Thou know'st the tale, with which all Lesbos rings,
"How the Sire's bed a daughter's lust profaned:—
"She also flies, a bird:—but conscious guilt
"Weighs on her; and the sight of day and light
"She shuns, and in the darkness hides her shame,
"Outcast of all the birds that cleave the air!"

The Raven heard impatient. "Hence!" he cried,
"Accursèd, with thy warning croak! I mock
"Such omens!" On he sped, and told his lord
How with a youth of Thessaly his Love
Betrayed him. From his brows the laurel crown
Dropped,—from his hands the lyre,—and from his cheeks
Their colour. In the transport of his wrath
He grasps his wonted arms, and to the head
The arrow draws, and with unerring aim
The bosom to his own so often pressed
Transpierces. With a shriek she fell, and drew
The weapon from the wound:—the purple flood
O'er her white limbs gushed following. "This," she said,
"I owed thee, Phœbus,—but another life
"I owed thee too;—I would it had been paid
"Ere this:—now, two in one together die!"
Life with that moan ebbed from her,—and the chill
Of Death close followed on the parting soul.
Too late his cruel doom her lover rues,
And hates himself, and hates the wrath that burned
Too fiercely, and the bird that made him know
Her fault and his dishonour,—cursing deep
The bow and hand that urged that fatal shaft,
And clasps her senseless form, and vainly strives
To conquer Fate, and all his healing arts
With fruitless effort plies. But when the pyre
Was raised, ere yet the last sad flames enwrapped
The corse, in sighs, and sobs, and all save tears,—
To Godlike eyes denied,—his sorrows burst.
So moans the heifer for her suckling calf,
What time she stands, and sees the fatal axe

Uplifted fall with crashing blow, and cleave
Through skull and brain. Upon her breast he strews
Due perfumes—hateful sweetness! and imprints
His latest kiss, and every rite, alas!
Too early claimed, fulfils:—nor bears to see
The fruit she owed him with her in those flames
Consumed, but from her womb and fate the boy
Delivering, to the cave of Chiron bears,—
Chiron, of human half, half-bestial form.
But for the Raven whose too truthful tongue
Hoped other meed, he bade him fly thenceforth
Banished from all assembly of white birds.

X. Gladly the Centaur took his God-born charge,
Pleased with a service by such honour paid.
Him, as it fell, his daughter visited,
Ocyrrhoë of the auburn locks,—so called
Of Chariclo from that swift-flowing stream
Whose banks beheld her birth:—nor skilled alone
In all ancestral arts, but wise to know
The secrets of the Fates. The child she saw,—
And in her bosom burned the God, and stirred
Her soul with prophet-impulse. "Grow!" she cried,
"Auspicious babe! to help and heal mankind!
"How oft to thee shall mortal bodies owe
"Their being! nay, how oft the parted soul,
"By thy so potent spell recalled, return!
"Power grudged thee by the jealous gods, and once
"Too oft exerted. By thy Grandsire's bolt
"I see it from thee reft. Thy Godhead falls
"A bloodless corse—thy bloodless corse once more

"A Godhead rises! Thrice the doom of Fate
"'Tis thine to 'scape and live anew!—But thou,
"My Sire,—not mortal, but by law of birth
"Destined to all the ages,—ah! what prayers
"For death I hear thee utter, when the pangs
"Of that Lernæan Hydra's venom rack
"Thy tortured limbs! Nor shall the pitying Gods
"Refuse, but make thee capable of Death,
"And bid those three stern Sisters snap thy thread."
She paused, and somewhat left untold. The sobs
Burst from her breast, and from her eyes the tears.
"The Fates," she cries, "prevent me, nor allow
"To end the tale—and choke my voice! Alas!
"Woe worth the arts which only serve to wake
"The wrath of Heaven! Ah! happier, had I ne'er
"The Future known to read! My human face
"Seems changing! In the grass I long to seek
"My food, and burn to gallop o'er the fields,
"A mare!—such form befits my Father's child
"Too well!—but why a mare complete, nor, like
"That Father, keep some share of human form?"
Confused, and strange, and scarce to those who heard
Intelligible, seemed her later words,
If words they could be called,—degenerate now
To sounds not equine quite, but as of one
Who strove to imitate the brute, and shrill
Ere long in perfect neigh. And now she stoops
Her shoulders to the pasture,—and her hands
A solid hoof of horn surrounds, and blends
And binds her fingers, and her mouth and neck
New size and length assume. Her garment's train

Floats in a tail. The locks that on her neck
Played free, play still, a mane. Transformed she stands
Complete in shape and voice, and from such change
New named, Ocyrrhoë erst, Evippe now.

XI. In vain the Father wept, and on thy name,
Great Lord of Delphos, called for aid. Not thine
The power to cross Jove's will, nor, if the power,
The present means,—what time, in shepherd's guise,
O'er Elis and Messenia's pleasant plains
Thou wander'dst, in this hand a crook, in that
The ordered pipe of seven unequal reeds,
That with its music pleased the rustic loves
That held thee then,—the while thy herds unwatched
Strayed o'er the Pylian fields. The tricksome son
Of Maia saw, and artful lured, and hid
The wanderers in a forest, marked of none
Save one old hind, in all that country known,
Called Battus, to whose charge rich Neleus gave
The meads and woodland pastures where his mares,
World-famous, grazed. Him Hermes feared, and led
Aside, and all his winning art put forth ;—
" Good friend, whate'er thy name ; should any come
" To seek yon herd, be thou discreet, and say
" Thou hast not seen them. Nay—think not I ask
" A barren favour :—this fair heifer pays
" Thy silence "—and he gave it. Glad at heart
Was Battus with the bargain. " Go," he cried,
" In peace "—and, pointing to a stone hard by,
" Yon stone shall speak as soon as I !"—The God
Seems to depart, but soon returns, disguised

In altered form and voice. "Ho! countryman!
"If here perchance a straying herd has passed,
"Tell me which way they took, and help detect
"The thief who stole them. For reward I pledge
"This bull and cow." The doubled bribe o'ercame
The sordid churl. "Look for them there," he cries,
"Beneath the hill." Beneath the hill they were.
Loud laughed the careless God—"Me to myself
"Dost thou betray, perfidious Clown!" he cried,
"Me to my very self?" And to a stone
The perjurer changed, still Index called, and so
Linked through all time to shame it ne'er deserved.

XII. Then spread the bearer of the mystic rod
His wings, and soared aloft, and, o'er the fields
Munychian and Lycæus' learnèd groves,
Looked down upon the land Minerva loved.
It chanced that day the Attic Maids, with rite
Ancestral, to the fane of Pallas bore
In baskets garlanded their offerings pure.
These saw the God returning, nor his way
Onward pursued, but, o'er them hovering, kept
Like course:—and, as a Kite, what time he sees
The reeking victim's gore, while yet the Priests
Around it thronging scare him, fears, nor flies
Away, but wheels at distance, and with hope
Of coming banquet flaps his greedy wings,—
So, poised above the Athenian towers, his flight
Cyllenius circling held. As brighter far
Than other stars shines Lucifer, and thou
Than Lucifer, O golden Phœbe,—so

Excelling all the rest young Herse moved,
That pomp's chief ornament, the pride and boast
Of all her sister-maids. Her beauty smote
The astonished God. And, as a bullet, whirled
From Balearic sling, amid the clouds
It pierces, warming, gathers, as it speeds,
A heat unknown before, and glows with fire,—
So sudden burned the hovering Deity.
No thought is more of Heaven :—Earth now is all
His journey's end. He lights, and, confident
In his own form, nor in such confidence
Unwarranted, disdains disguise : yet adds
Such charm as care can give, and parts and smooths
His locks, and orders fair his mantle's flow,
And all its golden fringe displays, and trims
His rod, of power to call or banish sleep,
And bids his wingèd feet their whitest wear.
Three chambers in the inner palace stood
With ivory decked and tortoise-shell :—the left
Aglauros held, the right was Pandrosos',
The midmost Herse's. First Aglauros spies
The entering God, and, what his name, demands,
And why he comes. To whom the Pleiad-born
Atlantian. "I am he who bear from Heaven
"The mandates of my Sire : my Sire is Jove
"Himself, no less. I care not to disguise
"My aim. Do thou thy Sister's secret keep,
"And let my Godlike offspring hail thee Aunt !
"Herse I love ! assist a lover's suit !"
With those same eyes she scanned him which of yore
Faithless on Pallas' hidden secret looked,

And for large bribe of gold her service pledged,
And bade him, for the nonce, the palace leave.
But on her act and her the angry eye
Of War's great Goddess looked,—and such a sigh
Heaved all her frame, that on her mailèd breast
The very Ægis shook. Still freshly wakes
The memory of the perjured hand profane
That erst her casket oped, and saw within
That motherless strange babe of Lemnos' Lord
Concealed. And shall she now fresh favour win
From yet another God, and her he loves,
And revel in the wealth her greed demands?—
Forthwith she seeks the home of Envy, foul
And black with all corruption. Deep recessed
Within a cave it lies, obscure. Nor sun
Upon it beams, nor through it any wind
Blows wholesome:—joyless, numb with idle cold,
Nor knowing warmth of fire, nor cheer of light.
Before the portal War's great Goddess paused,—
Which none may dare to pass,—and with her spear
The lintel struck:—the clanging doors flew wide.
The Hag within she sees, on banquet foul
Gorging of viper's flesh, fit nutriment
Of envy; and, disgusted, from the sight
Averts her eyes. She, slowly from the ground
Upreared, unwilling left the hateful meal
Half finished, and with leaden step came forth,
And, with a groan, the Goddess knew, so graced
In form, so bright of panoply,—and sighed
Even from her inmost soul at sight so fair.
Bloodless her cheeks and white, and lean her form

Unnourished;—both her eyes askew;—her teeth
Foul and discoloured:—all her dugs with gall
Were green, and from her tongue the venom dripped.
Never she smiles, or with such smile alone
As sight of other's woe may move;—nor knows
The balm of sleep, still tossed by wakeful cares;—
And sees alone such luck as haps to men
To sicken at the sight; and carps at all,
And at herself,—her proper torment still.
Briefly the Goddess spoke, nor cared to hide
Her loathing—"With thy venom speed, and touch
"Of Cecrops' daughters one, Aglauros:—so
"I will it!" With the words she struck on earth
Her spear's support, and vaulting, soared to heaven.
Murmuring, with eye asquint the Beldame marks
Her upward flight, much grieving not to dare
Refuse obedience:—then her staff she takes
Wreathed all around with thorns, and, veiled in clouds,
Sets forth. Where'er she moves the verdant fields
Are parched, the herbage burns, the withered ears
Beneath her track fall dead. Her breath infects
Each town, each house she passes, and pollutes
The life within them. To Minerva's seat
She comes at last, where Wit, and Wealth, and Peace,
In blessèd union smile, and scarce refrains
From tears, to see no cause why tears should flow;
And, entering straight the bower of Cecrops' child,
The Goddess' hest fulfils. With cankered hand
The Maiden's breast she touches, and her heart
Distracts with thoughts that prick like hookèd thorns,
And poisonous breathes upon her, till through all

Her bones and veins the livid venom spreads
And works infused. Nor leaves she far to seek
Fresh aliment of ill. Before her eyes
She sets her happier Sister's chance,—a God
Her Lover,—and the God's own beauty paints
In fairest hues, and artful magnifies
The charm of all she draws. With secret pangs
Aglauros writhes tormented. Night and day
Alike she pines, and slowly wastes, as ice
Wastes slowly in the winter's doubtful Sun;
And, inly chafing at her Sister's bliss,
Burns smouldering, like a heap of weeds that chars
With smothered heat, but never breaks in flame.
Often she called on Death to spare her eyes
The sight she dreaded:—to her Sire austere
Oft purposed Herse to accuse:—at last
Upon the threshold took her post, resolved
To meet and bid the coming God begone!
The coming God all blandishments, and prayers
Proffers, and winning words;—"'Tis vain!" she cries,
"Depart! or from this place I stir not more!"
Quick answered her Cyllenius,—"Be it so!
"I take thee at thy word!" and, with his rod,
The carven doors struck open. All in vain
She strove to rise. The flexile limbs with which
We sit refused to straighten, torpid-bound
And motionless:—her body's trunk alone
She moves. A sudden stiffness all her joints
Freezing pervades. Her veins are bloodless all
And pallid. And, as when some Cancer spreads,
Immedicable, to the parts diseased

Fast adding those yet wholesome,—so the ice
Of Death creeps upward to her breast, and shuts
The passages of Life and breath. No more
She strove to speak, or, had she striven, no voice
Could more have found its way. Her neck, her mouth,
Were stone. The maid a bloodless statue sate;
Nor even such whiteness kept as marble should,
But took a dark hue from the soul within.

XIII. Such vengeance meet for word and thought profane
The Son of Maia took,—and spread his wings
For Heaven, and left the towers of Pallas named.
There called him straight his Sire apart;—nor told
The cause of Love which moved him:—but "O Son!
"Tried minister of all my hests," he said,
"Delay not! with thy wonted swiftness haste,
"And seek the land—Sidonia by its sons
"Surnamed—which from the left thy Mother-star
"The Pleiad views. A royal herd thine eye
"Will meet, on mountain-pastures grazing:—this
"Down to the shore direct." He spoke. The herd
Was guided from the mountains to the shore,
Where, with her maidens girt, the Tyrian King's
Fair daughter used her sport to take. Ill-matched
Are Majesty and Love, nor in one breast
Hold seemly union!—He, the Sire and Lord
Of Gods, whose hand the triple-forkèd bolt
Of lightning arms, whose awful nod the world
Makes tremble to its base, his attribute
Of Rule, his sceptre, lays aside, and moves
In form a Bull, and 'mid the heifers lows,

And, in such form yet fair, the pastures treads !
In colour as the snow which never yet
The foot of man hath trampled, or the breath
Of watery Auster warmed. Upon his neck
The muscles swell;—below his shoulder hangs
His dewlap;—small his horns, but seeming turned
And wrought by deftest hand, transparent white
As purest gem. No threatening brow—no glare
Of eye—all peace he looks. Agenor's child
Admiring sees the beast, so beautiful,
So gentle,—yet that seeming mildness shrinks
To tempt by touch. At last she summons heart
And to the white mouth proffers flowers. The flowers
Gladly the brute accepts, and licks the hand
Which offers—foretaste of the bliss to come
Which scarce he waits impatient. Now he frisks,
Now wanton leaps along the mead, and now
Rolls his white sides upon the yellow sands.
And now—all fear subdued—his breast he yields
To the maid's fondling palm, and now his horns
Delighted sees with garlands wreathed :—And now,
Unknowing what she mounts, upon his back
She takes her seat. 'Tis done ! With gentle pace
From shore to ocean strays the bull, and feigns
In the wave's marge his hoofs to lave, and still
Treads deeper, and ere long,—his prize secured,—
Strikes fairly out to sea ! Too late alarmed
Back looks she on the fast-receding shore
Too rashly left :—and with her better hand
Clasps terrified a horn :—the other, pressed
On his broad back, supports her,—as the breeze
Behind her wafts her mantle's rippling folds.

THE

METAMORPHOSES

OF

PUBLIUS OVIDIUS NASO

BOOK III.

THE METAMORPHOSES.

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I. And now the God the bull's false form had doffed,
And owned himself, and on the shores of Crete
His suit had urged and won. Meanwhile her Sire,
Unknowing what had happed, to Cadmus gave
Command to seek his sister, and decreed,
Just and unjust at once, his banishment
The doom of failure. Many a shore he searched,
But what Jove hides who finds?—Agenor's wrath
To his own land forbade return:—and thus
A suppliant to the oracles he came
Of Phœbus, asking where henceforth to find
A home. "What time," the Deity replied,
"Thou meet'st a heifer in the lonely fields
"That never yet the yoke hath borne, or toiled
"Before the crookèd share, her make thy guide:—
"And, where she lays her down to rest, thy walls
"Build fearless, and Bœotia call the land."
Scarce yet the grot Castalian had the youth
Descending left, when lo! unwatched he sees

A heifer, slowly pacing, on whose neck
No trace of toil was visible. Her track
He follows, suiting to her speed his own,
And silent thanks to Phœbus gives for road
So marked. Across Cephisus' ford she led,
And past the fields of Panope;—then stopped,
And, raising high her spreading horns to heaven,
With lowings filled the air, and turned, and looked
Upon the band that followed her, and chose
Her place, and on the soft grass laid her down.
The thankful Cadmus with a kiss the soil
Greets, and those unknown hills and fields salutes:
And now to Jove due rites prepares, and sends
His followers, at some living fount to seek
Libations pure of water. Nigh at hand
Stood an old grove, ne'er yet by axe profaned,
And in its midst a cave, with entrance low
Beneath a natural arch of stone, o'ergrown
With twig and shoot and leaf, whence issued bright
A plenteous rill. But in the cavern's depth
A monstrous Snake there lay, sacred to Mars,
Golden of back and crest, and fiery-eyed,
And swoln with venom foul, whose triple tongue
Flickered 'twixt rows of triple-ordered fangs.
Soon as those luckless sons of Tyre the shade
Had entered, and with plashing bowl disturbed
The stillness of the place, the horrid head
Erect with angry hiss looked forth. The blood
Their veins deserted; sudden tremors shook
Their limbs; and from their hands the vessels fell.
But he, his flexile orbs of scaly coil

Twining, in arch enormous rears aloft
His length, and, with his greater bulk in air
Erect, on all the grove looks down :—not less
In size than that huge Snake which parts in Heaven
The greater and the lesser Bear :—then swoops
Down on that hapless band. Escapes not one,
Or flying, or resisting, or though fear
Of both incapable. These with his fangs,
These in his crushing coils he slays, and these
With the rank poison in his breath exhaled.
Now highest burned the noon, and shortest lay
The shadows, when, uneasy at their stay
Cadmus his comrades sought. A lion's hide
His shoulders clad; in hand a spear he bore
Steel-pointed, and a lighter dart ;—within,
A fearless heart, before all weapons else.
Too soon within that fatal grove he found
Their bodies stretched in Death, and that huge foe
Victorious, licking with his bloody tongue
Their wounds yet gaping fresh. "Tried friends and true !"
He cried, "your fate I here avenge or share !"
And stooping, with his right hand reft from earth
A rock's vast mass, and with huge effort hurled.
Unhurt the serpent bore the shock, whose force
Had shaken to their base the battlements
Of many a city,—by his scaly mail
Defended and the stubborn hide, whence back
The stone recoiled. But not against the dart,
More keen, such fence availed, which deep infixed
Stuck quivering in his curving spine, and pierced
With iron point his vitals. Mad with pain

Backward his head the monster writhes, and sees
His wound, and gripes the lance's shaft, and bends,
And wrenches, now on this side, now on that,
And with vast effort snaps it from the barb
That rankles still within. His native rage
New wrath inflames, and in his throat the veins
Wellnigh to bursting swell. His poisonous jaws
Are white with foam. With echoing stroke his scales
The Earth beneath him lash, and every breath
That issues from his Stygian throat the air
Around infects. Now in enormous coil
He curls convulsed, now rigid as the mast
Of some huge ship extends, and hurls himself
With all his force upon his foe, and through
The branches crashes, like some torrent swoln
With wintry storms. Agenor's son the shock
Eludes, and on his lion's hide receives
The threatening fangs, and with his spear-point meets
And checks their fury. Madly on the steel
With harmless wound he bites;—against it break
His fangs:—and from his poisonous maw the blood
Flows visible, and flecks the turf beneath
With crimson drops. But, lightly pricked as yet,
Backward he draws his wounded neck, and yields
Some space, and yielding shuns a deeper thrust.
But on him Cadmus presses, and the steel
Drives in his throat, and to a giant oak,
That bars his farther regress, pins him fast.
Bows with his weight the trunk, and every branch
Lashed with his tail's convulsive throes resounds.
Upon the vast bulk of his conquered foe

Gazing the conqueror stood, when lo! a voice—
Uncertain whence—rang clear—"Agenor's son!
"See, in that serpent slain, the form thyself
"Shalt one day wear!" With sudden terror fled
From his white cheeks the blood, and every hair
Rose bristling from his head. But from the skies
Came favouring Pallas to the hero's aid,
And bade him draw the monster's fangs, and sow
With that strange seed the loosened earth, the germ
Of his realm's future people. Straight he drove
The ordered furrows, and the teeth, ordained
To human harvest, buried. Scarce the tale
May claim belief. The soil upheaved, and first
Above the surface glittering spear-points rose,
Then, helmets with their nodding crests, and next
Shoulders, and breasts, and arms, that brandished fierce
Buckler, and sword, and lance;—a warrior-crop
Full-ripened at its birth. So,—when the crowd
Fills, on some feast, the Theatre,—aloft
The curtain rises, and by slow degrees
Reveals its pictured forms:—the heads at first,
The bodies following, rise in sight, and last
The feet upon its lower marge appear.
Startled at those apparent foes, his arms
The hero grasps; but, from the earth-born ranks,
"Forbear!"—one shouted loud,—"nor interpose
"In civil strife!" and, as he spoke, his sword
Struck dead his nearest comrade, and himself
Fell by another's spear:—as instant fate
The slayer meets,—his earliest breath his last!
Through all like madness burns; with mutual wounds

The new-born brothers fratricidal fall :—
Till wellnigh all the short-lived band, a heap
Still quivering, on the Earth that bare them, bleeds.
Five yet survived,—Echion one. His arms,
(So Pallas prompted,) on the ground he flung
And asked, and pledged, a truce : and, with those five
To aid, Agenor's son the Oracle
Fulfilled, and traced his future city's walls.

II. So rose the towers of Thebes ; and, lifted thus
By exile to all honour, Cadmus reigned
The son-in-law of Gods. Fair progeny
Of sons and daughters blessed him, and from those
Due issue, young as yet. But ah ! who dares,—
Ere the last day of life hath set, and Death
And funeral rite from all ill hap insure,—
Call any happy? From a grandchild's fate,
Cadmus, 'mid all thy wealth, thy earliest cause
Of sorrow sprang :—fate cruel, pitiful,
Of changing brows that sprouted into horns,
And raging hounds that lapped their master's blood !
Sad tale, but shameless :—miserable chance
But guiltless all,—for error is not crime.
What time the Sun rode midway 'twixt the Poles,
And shortest in the noon the shadows lay,
Upon a mount, where ever plenteous game
And various paid the hunter's toil, his steps
Actæon stayed, and to the train who shared
His sport among the tangled thickets, spake.
" Enough, O comrades, for to-day of spoil
" Hath Fortune given :—with blood of slaughtered beasts

"Our nets and weapons reek. To-morrow morn
"Aurora from her saffron car shall see
"The chase renewed. Now, Phœbus from his height
"Midmost 'twixt East and West too fiercely darts
"His beams, and from the cleft Earth rise and swim
"The vaporous exhalations. Cease we then
"Our labours, and the knotted toils collect."
A vale was nigh, with shade of pitchy pine
And arrowy cypress cool, Gargaphia called,
To Dian sacred :—in its depths a cave
With trailing foliage roofed. No art of man
Thereon had wrought, but Nature's self, with skill
Than art more cunning, framed its native arch
Of pumice light and sandstone, whence adown
A spring gushed musical, with shallow wave
Yet clear, and broadening by a marge of grass,
Whereby the Goddess of the woods, fatigued,
Was wont to rest her from the chase, and cool
Her virgin limbs in the refreshing stream.
There now she came, and of her train to this
Her darts and quiver gave and bow unstrung,
To that her robe ungirt. Her sandals' clasp
Two more unloose :—while one, of nicer hand,
Ismenian Crocale, her tresses' wealth
Loose floating gathers to a knot,—her own
Unbound. In urns capacious, Hyale,
Nephele, Rhanis, Psecas, Phiale,
The water bring, and o'er their Mistress' form,
The wonted coolness pour. Thus as she bathed,—
Roaming with idle steps and purposeless
The unknown glades, his hunting for the day

Abandoned, on that secret haunt—so Fate
Would have it—came Actæon, to the cave
Drawn by the tinkling rill. With sudden shriek,
Scared at the sight of man, the Nymphs awoke
The echoes, beating wild their bosoms bare,
And round Diana pressed, and clung, and strove
To hide her form;—though high above them all
And taller by the head the Goddess towered.
Flushed with such colour as the fronting Sun
Paints on the clouds, or at the purple dawn
Aurora wears, stood Dian, thus exposed
Unrobed; and 'mid the circling band that veiled
Her beauties sidelong turned, with wrathful look
Askance upon the intruder. Oh! for one
Of all her arrows now! The neighbouring stream
Supplied the want. With vengeful hand she dashed
Against his manly cheek and o'er his brow
The gathered drops, and terrible his doom
Foreboding—"Go!" she cried, "and, if thy tongue
"Can shape the tale, tell how thou sawest once
"A Goddess naked!" As she spake, the horns
Branched sudden from his dripping brows,—his neck
Swelled ampler, and with tapering point his ears
Erected stood, and arms in legs and hands
In cloven feet were lost, and dappled hide
The place of skin usurped. With all the fears
Of his new nature trembling, fast he fled,
At his own swiftness marvelling in his flight,
And in a clear stream saw his mirrored horns,
And "Ah! unhappy!" strove to cry:—but voice
Came none:—an inarticulate moan was all

The sound he uttered now. Down his new cheeks
The big tears coursed. The human mind alone
Unchanged was left. Ah! whither shall he turn?
His home?—his father's palace?—Shame forbids
Return to these:—the forest?—Fear denies
That refuge. While he hesitates, his pack
Questing espies him, and with tuneful cry
Opens upon the game. Melampus first,
Of Spartan breed, gave tongue: Ichnobates
Of Cretan blood, sagacious, swelled the note;
And like the wind the rest came rushing fast,
Dorceus, and Pamphagus, Oribasus,
Arcadian all,—and strong Nebrophonus,
Lælaps, and savage Theron, Pterelas
For speed and Agre famed for keenest scent,
Hylæus, with his boar's wound yet unhealed,—
Nape, half wolf in blood,—and Pœmenis
Terror of beasts,—Harpyia, with twin whelps
Beside her,—Ladon of the narrow flanks
In Sicyon bred,—Dromas, and Canace,
Sticte, and Tigris, Alce, Leucon white
As snow, and sable-coated Asbolus,
And Lacon strong of limb, Aëllo swift
As wind,—and Thoüs and Lycisca, twins
Of the same Cyprian litter,—Harpalus
Conspicuous by his forehead's darker spot,
And Melaneus, and Lachne rough of coat,
And Labros, and Agriados, and shrill
Of yelp Hylactor, all of Cretan sire
And Spartan mother bred,—and more whose names
Were long to tell. All these the prize in sight

Inflames, and all, o'er stones and pathless rocks
Where way was difficult, or way was none,
Press open-mouthed the chase. Poor fugitive!
He flies the very followers whom his cheer
Was wont to urge, along the very tracks
Himself so oft pursuing trod! And "Hold!"
He would have cried—"Actæon I! your Lord!
"Do ye not know me?"—But the words refused
His will. The baying of the eager hounds
Rang deafening. Melanchæres first his fangs
Fixed in his flank, Theridamas was next,
And on his shoulder Oresitrophus
Hung fast:—the rest had earlier start, but these
By shorter path outstripped them, and his flight
Arresting, gave their fellows time to reach
The prey. The whole pack tears him now, though all
Can scarce find space to tear. With sobs and moans
Not human, but such sounds as never yet
Issued from throat of deer, his piteous plaints
The forest fill. Prone on his knees he falls,
And, now on this side now on that, his head
Turns suppliant, as a man in deadliest strait
His arms imploring waves. With fierce halloo,
Unknowing whom they tear, his comrades urge
The ravening pack, and wondering look around
To find their leader wanting, shouting loud
"Actæon! ho! Actæon!" To the name
In answer vain his head he turns. Again
The cry "Actæon!" rings, and chides their Lord
Absent from such a spoil. Absent! alas!
Too present is he! Would their taunt were true,

And he they blame for absence could but come
And see, not feel, such Death!—No hope! the hounds
Were rending limb from limb, their muzzles red
With his best blood:—how should they recognise
In that torn deer their Lord?—and not, till life,
Welling through countless wounds, to its last drop
Had ebbed,—was Dian's vengeance satisfied.

III. Wide bruited flew the tale:—to these, such doom
Too heavy seemed and more than just,—to those
But such as outraged Maid should pass:—nor lacked
For argument each censure. Juno deigned
Alone nor praise nor blame; but glad beheld
The blow that maimed Agenor's race; and all
The hate that for Jove's Tyrian paramour,
Europa, long her soul had nursed, transferred
To all who shared her blood. That earlier wrong
A later now embitters:—Semele
Bears in her teeming womb the fruit of Jove.
High swelled Saturnia's wrath, and protest fierce
Leaped to her lips, ill checked. "What profit yet,"
She cried, "hath protest brought me? From herself
"I seek my vengeance now! She dies!—if still
"Juno her ancient name of 'Greatest' holds,—
"If yet the jewelled sceptre of the skies
"Befits my grasp,—Jove's sister both and wife,—
"Sister beyond dispute;—for wife,—that name
"The Theban, with one stolen embrace content,
"Haply may yet allow me, nor designs
"More wrong. What more?—she breeds! there lacked but this!

" This swelling manifest of guilt !—this vaunt
" To bear a child to Jupiter, a boast
" But scantly to myself permitted, seals
" Her doom !—She trusts her beauty :—she shall rue
" That confidence !—or Saturn's child disowns
" Her name, or Jove himself ere long shall hurl
" His darling, blasted, to the waves of Styx !"
She said ;—and, rising from her throne, in clouds
Enveloped sought the home of Semele,
Thence issuing, at her threshold, in the form
Of Epidaurian Beroë, in past time
Her childhood's nurse :—with whitened locks, and cheeks
With wrinkles furrowed,—limbs and step with age
Bending and trembling,—and such voice as suits
The tongue of withered eld. And as their talk
Wore on, and Jove was named, " Alas !" she sighed,
" Would Jove indeed it were ! but of such feints
" Experience warns : and, in the guise of Gods,
" Betrayers win an easy prey. If Jove
" He be, why, let him prove it ! Why not give
" Pledge of his love, and, if his vaunt be true,
" Come to thy arms in form like that he wears
" When Juno's couch he seeks, and manifest
" The Godhead he asserts ?" The insidious wile
Wrought on the child of Cadmus, and a boon
She asks, unnamed, of Jove. " Name it !" he cries,
" Freely, nor fear denial :—by the might
" Of Styx, that Fear and God of Gods, 'tis thine !"
Glad at the fatal grant that proves too well
Her power, nor knowing how the Love that yields
Her suit is Death, " Be mine," she cries,—" when next

"Thou comest,—in such form as Juno's arms
"Embrace in Heaven!" To check the hasty speech
He strove—in vain. The fatal words had way:—
The boon was asked:—the oath was sworn:—and sad
And sorrowful, with many a sigh, to Heaven
Jove mounts. Around him all his following clouds
He summons,—and his storms,—the flash that cleaves
The wind-swept rack,—the thunders,—and the bolt
Of Death inevitable;—yet their force
Tempers as best he may, nor with that blaze
Too fierce which erst in shattered ruin hurled
Typhœus of the hundred hands, invests
His majesty, but with the milder fires,
In Vulcan's stithy by his Cyclops wrought,
Less terrible, less angry,—named of Gods
His Second Thunders. Thus arrayed, the bower
Of Semele he seeks. But not even thus
May mortal frame endure a God! The boon
Her Lover grants is Death:—and in his arms
She burns! But from her womb the babe unborn—
So runs the tale—he freed, and in his thigh
Inserted gave gestation due, and bore,
And placed in Ino's secret care, to tend
His infancy, till Nysa's Nymphs received
The charge, and in their distant caverns hid,
And with due nurture reared the growing God.

IV. Thus, while on Earth the laws of Fate their sway
Held steady, and young Bacchus, doubly born,
Safe in his cradle slept,—great Jove, they say,
By nectar warmed, with Juno toying held

Contention amorous. "Your sense of love
"Is keener far than ours!" he cried. "Not so!"
The Goddess answered. To Tiresias both
Appealed, experienced in each sex, to solve
The controversy. In his youth, the Sage
Two serpents in the greenwood shade had marked
Engendering, and with stroke of careless staff
Disparted. With the blow—strange prodigy!—
His sex was altered, and for seven long years
The man a woman lived. But, with the eighth,
Again the self-same pair he saw. "If thus,"
He cried, "my stroke had mystic power to change
"The striker once, again I strike!" He struck
And stood restored to sex and form, as birth
Had made him. Of that contest arbiter
For Jove he gave his voice. Saturnia, vexed
More than such cause might justify, the Judge
Smote with eternal blindness. Never God
What God hath done may change:—but pitying Jove
Gave him with mental vision to foresee
All future things, and with prophetic power
Made recompense for that lost light of eyes.

V. So lived he, through Aonian cities famed,
With hest that ne'er misled, in all their straits
Guiding the folk. Liriope was first
His certain art to prove,—Liriope,
Of Ocean-birth, whom erst Cephisus caught
Amid his windings, and, with treacherous wave
Imprisoning, forced and won. A beauteous boy
She bore him, from his earliest years the love

Of all the Nymphs, Narcissus called,—and sought
The Sage, with question, if for length of days
The child might hope. "Ay," answered her the Seer,
"If ne'er himself he knows!" The words seemed vain
And idle, but the event, and novel cause
Of Death, and strangest passion, proved them true.
So fifteen years and one rolled on, and fair
Narcissus grew, 'twixt boy and man, the love
Of many a youth and maid, to love of none
Or youth or maid responsive, coldly wrapped
In self and native pride of form. It chanced,
What time for timorous deer his toils he spread,
A Nymph beheld him, Echo, Nymph whom none
Addressed unanswered, none herself with speech
Addressing first; not yet a bodiless voice
But in fair form substantial, though of words
The babbling Maid such use alone possessed
As still she owns,—the latest sounds that reach
Her ear returning for reply. Such doom
From Juno came. When oft her truant Lord
Jealous among the mountain Nymphs she sought,
Echo in talk would hold her, till the search
Was vain—the Nymphs were gone. Saturnia saw
The fraud. "The tongue that thus hath baffled me
"Shall serve thee little more," she cried,—"Small use
"Of voice henceforth be thine!" The act the threat
Confirmed, and Echo now but knows what sounds
Are uttered last responsive to return,
As mocked, and only what she hears repeats.
'Twas thus among the pathless shades she saw
The youth, and loved:—stealthy upon his steps

She followed, and, the more she followed, more
Enamoured burned. Not quicker does the torch
In sulphur steeped take fire. How oft she longed
With gentle words to greet, with loving prayer
To move him;—but that first accost the doom
Of Juno not allowed. Yet,—what she could,—
Anxious for speech she waited, prompt what words
He uttered to return. Alone he stood,
Far from his comrades,—and "Is no one here?"
He cried:—"One here!" the nymph replied. He gazed
Astonished round. "Then come!" he shouted:—quick
The voice the caller called, "Then come!"—amazed
He stood, for no one came. "Why shun me thus?"
He cried, and back the words repeated rang.
Still he persists, "Here! meet me!" never sound
More grateful struck her ears. "Here! meet me!" glad
She answered, from the thicket with the words
Issuing, and fain with loving arms to clasp
Her summoner. But ah! he flies, and shuns
The proffered love. "Nay! rather death," he cries,
"Than thou shalt say 'Be mine!'" "Be mine!" was all
Despair could answer. And from that time forth,
Rejected, in the woods and caverns lone
Concealed she dwelt, still loving, and with grief
Of that cold scorn pined ever, till her form
Faded with sorrow, and all kindly juice
Wherewith our frame is nourished, into air
Wasting, was lost, and only voice and bones
Were left. The voice remains. The bones, they say,
Took rocky form and texture. In the woods

She lurks, seen never on the mountain-side,
But heard of all,—mere unsubstantial sound!

VI. So she, so many a Nymph of wave or hill
His coldness rued,—so all who loved. So spurned
"May he himself," they cried, with angry prayer,
"Thus love and thus be scorned!" Great Nemesis,
The entreaty heard, and owned for just. A fount
There stood, that land within, of silvery depth
Unstained, upon whose marge no shepherd's foot
Had trodden yet, to mountain-goat and all
The pasturing herds unknown,—whose wave no tongue
Of thirsting beast, or wing of wandering bird
Had ruffled;—never falling branch had marred
Its stillness; green its grassy brink, still fresh
By the near moisture fed, and girt with shades
That from its coolness ever barred the sun.
This, as it chanced, the boy with toil of chase
Wearied, and heat, discovered, by the charm
Allured of shade and tinkling rill, and stooped
His thirst to slake. Far other thirst that draught
Awoke. Himself reflected in the wave
He sees, and for a substance takes the shade,
And for the image burns. Himself himself
Inflames:—and, fixed as statue sculptured fair
Of Parian marble, kneels the youth, and sees
Those double stars, his eyes, reflected bright
In that smooth mirror;—locks which well might deck
The brows of Bacchus or Apollo;—cheeks
Soft with the down of youth,—and neck of snow;—
All grace of form and colour, lily and rose

Due blended :—and each charm, that ever moved
The love of others, loves. Himself inspires
His passion :—all he praises is his own.
Wooing and wooed, the flame he yearns to raise
But his own breast consumes. With kisses vain
He prints the eluding waters, and with clasp
Of eager arms strives 'neath the wave to clip
The fleeting shape, nor in its lines himself
Yet finds, and burns for what he sees, though what
He sees he fails to recognise, nor knows
What error 'tis that cheats and fascinates
His eyes. Fond fool! What hope is there to seize
That mocking image? What thine arms would fold
Is nothing! Only turn thee, and thy love
Is lost and gone! That fair reflection, void
Of substance, fades and vanishes ;—with thee
It came,—with thee it stays,—with thee, if thou
Canst go, it goes!—But neither lack of food
Nor rest can make him go. Upon the grass
Outstretched, with gaze insatiate still he dwells
Fixed on that lying form,—and his own eyes
Destroy him. To the woods around his arms
Appealing wild he flings :—and "Say, ye shades,"
He cries—"for well ye know, whose bowers have screened
"So many a happy wooer, say, was e'er,
"In all the ages counted since your birth,
"So hapless love as mine? In all your years
"So passion-wasted saw ye ever one,
"Hopeless, as I? I see, and love, but what
"I see and love escapes and mocks me! Yet
"Nor distance wide, nor mountain high, nor tower,

" Nor portal closed, divides us ;—a mere drop
" Of water bars me ! What I love returns
" My flame, else wherefore, when I stoop to kiss
" The lucent wave which shrines it, doth it raise
" Those lips to answer mine ? Ever I seem
" To touch it, but some slenderest barrier mars
" The hope. Come forth, whoe'er thou art ! Why thus
" Thy lover mock ? What keeps thee from these arms ?
" Am I not young—not fair ? The Nymphs, whose love
" Pursues me, tell me so ! Thy face, which bends
" Kindly to mine, still bids me hope ;—those arms
" With meeting arms thou seem'st to seek ;—thy smile,
" My smile returns ; and, if I weep, the tears
" Seem from thine eyes to gush ; and, as I read
" The motion of thy lips, thy words appear
" To give reply which these dull ears in vain
" Would catch.—Alas ! I see it now ! myself
" It is that in this form I view ! myself
" I burn for ! I myself alone the flame
" Endure I fain would kindle ! What for me,
" Wooing or wooed, remains ? What yet to woo
" Is left ? Myself is all I seek,—and all
" I want I have—a pauper in that wealth !
" Ah ! could I quit this frame of mine,—strange vow
" For lover's tongue !—and what I love resign,
" Myself, to find in thee !—Alas ! my strength
" Fast fails me, nor much longer space of life
" I feel is left ! Blighted in prime of youth
" I fade,—nor grieving thus to end my pain
" So only that fair form might longer live,
" Nor in my Death all that I love should die ! "

He said, and madly to that mirrored face
Bent him once more. The tears that from his eyes
Dropped in the fount the image blurred. Its lines
Confused he saw, and shrieked—"No! no! not thus
"Forsake thy lover! Stay! if not to touch
"Be granted, let me see thee still! still feed
"At least with sight my madness!"—And he tore
His robe, and on his breast with wasted hand
Beat passionate, till, where he struck, the blood
The whiteness of his bosom flushed, and glowed
As choicest apple glows, half white half red,
Or clustered grape, not fully ripe, with blush
Of partial purple varied. And he saw
The clearing wave that colour mock, nor more
Endured it, but, as waxen torch dissolves
Beneath the flame, or frost of morning hoar
Melts in the breaking sun, so, passion-worn
And with that inward fire consumed, his frame
Wasted and faded into naught,—nor charm
Remained of lily and rose, nor strength, nor use
Of limb, nor vestige of that form which moved
But now the love of Echo, as of all
Who saw. But she, poor Nymph, though writhing yet
Beneath his scorn, with tears that hapless fate
Beheld, and, ever as he moaned "Alas!"
"Alas!" replied, and, as with fainter blow
His breast he beat, sad imitative sounds
Sorrowing herself returned. "Ah! vainly loved!"
Were his last words, ere on that image closed
His failing gaze, "Farewell!"—"Ah! vainly loved!
"Farewell!" was Echo's answer. So his head

Sank gently on the grass, and still his eyes
Constant, in dying sought his cause of Death,
Nor ceased within that nether realm received
Beneath the very waves of Styx, to seek
The image that he loved. His sister-band
Of Naiads mourned him, and with tresses shorn
Bewailed his fate; and Echo to the plaint
Of Dryads loud lamenting lent her own.
And now they would have buried him:—the bier,
The pile, the torch, were there:—but where the corse?
A flower alone was all they found, whose heart
Blazed golden 'mid a circlet of white leaves.

VII. Quick through the cities of Achaia flew
The tale, and honour crowned Tiresias' name.
Yet one was found to scoff,—Echion's son
Pentheus,—for foul contempt of Heaven and Gods
Long infamous. With bitter gibe the Sage
He taunted, and "What trust in Seer," he cried,
"Who cannot see?" Irate the Prophet shook
The hoary honours of his brow. "For thee
"Well were it, that thine eyes as mine were dark,
"So never might'st thou Bacchus' mystic rite
"Behold! The day will come—nor distant long—
"When a new guest shall visit thee, the son
"Of Semele, great Liber,—whom with fame
"And honour due receive,—or, piecemeal torn
"I see thy scattered limbs;—these woodland shades,
"Thy mother's self, and all her sisters, red
"And reeking with thy gore! Thou hear'st thy fate!
"For well I know thy madness will deny

" The Deity his right. But, in that hour,
" Remember how a Seer, though blind, could see !"
He said. Echion's son contemptuous drove
The Prophet from his hall. But not the less
Time proved his truth, and what he spake fulfilled.
For Liber comes, foretold. With festal mirth
Of thronging crowds the fields resound :—the press
Still thickens :—wife and maiden, man and boy,
Noble and churl, in those new rites to share,
All emulous and eager. " Hold !" the voice
Of Pentheus shouts,—" what madness thus, what rage
" Misleads you, you from that old Snake who sprang
" Warriors from birth ? What magic in this clash
" Of brass, or blast of crookèd horn, resides,
" That you, whom sword, and trump, and hostile rank
" Arrayed, could never daunt, this woman's howl
" Of drunken frenzy, and this rabble-rout
" Obscene, with idle clang should awe ?—To you
" What shall I say, ye elders, ye who erst
" O'er the broad seas your wandering household Gods
" Brought here, and in a younger Tyre enshrined,—
" Must ye now yield to armless hands ?—And ye
" Of younger years and nearer mine, whose grasp
" The sword and not the thyrsus fits, whose brows
" The helm and not the garland,—think, O think
" What parentage ye boast, and let your breasts
" That Serpent-Sire inspirit, who alone
" So many overcame. He for his fount
" And natal lake contending died. On you
" Your fame it is that calls. The men he slew
" Were heroes ! For your Country's honour drive

"These dastards hence! If Fate to Thebes denies
"A longer date, oh! let her walls at least
"With shock of siege, and blaze of fire, and clash
"Of weapon fall, if fall they must! Such lot
"Were bitter, but not shameful! Men might tell
"The tale, and weep the loss, nor blush to weep!
"Now to a beardless Boy we yield, whose hand
"Nor wields the sword, nor reins the steed, nor joys
"In aught that warriors honour,—curled, and crowned,
"Perfumed, and garlanded, and purple-robed,
"And braided o'er with gold,—whom I, forthwith,—
"Stand ye aside and witness,—will compel
"To own the Sire he vaunts, and these vain rites
"He claims, a lie! What! shall Acrisius dare
"His ports in Argos bar, nor entrance yield
"To this impostor-God, and Pentheus, here,
"With Thebes to back him, give him place? Away!
"And drag him bound before me!"—to his guards
He turned—"This instant bring him!"—With vain prayers
Cadmus adjured, and Athamas, and all
His kin, and strove to stay him. They but stirred
The rage they would have curbed: so checked, more fierce
His frenzy blazed, and what would save him served
Alone to speed his Fate. So downward rolls
Some mighty River, smooth as strong, while yet
It meets no obstacle; but, let some rock
Or trunk submerged its course obstruct, and loud
It roars, and chafes, and foams, by hindrance lashed
To madness. Wounded, bloody, those he sent
Return, nor bring their captive. "Bacchus!" shouts
The tyrant, "Where is Bacchus?"—"Him," they say

Trembling, "we found not: but this Minister,
"Fresh from his rites, we bring," and, with bound hands
They showed a captured Tuscan of his train.

VIII. Savagely on him glared the King, and ill
His instant doom forbore. "O Thou," he cried,
"Destined to Death, and by thy death to warn
"Thy crew, who art thou? speak! What land produced,
"What Sire begot thee?" Calm, and void of fear,
Answered the youth,—"Acœtes am I called,
"By birth Mæonian. They to whom I owe
"That birth, of humble rank. No wealth of fields
"Tilled by the plough my Sire bequeathed, no flocks,
"No herds. Himself was poor:—the nets and hooks
"Wherewith the sportive people of the Sea
"He snared, his all composed. His art was all
"His revenue. He taught me that, and said,
"'Inherit all I have, my Son!' And so
"He died, and for my fortune left the Sea.
"But weary of the narrow rocks that bound
"That daily life, I learned with ready hand
"My little skiff to steer, and how to read
"The stars,—the Goat whose shining bodes the rain,—
"The watery Hyades,—Taÿgete,—
"And Arctos;—and what Quarters wont to send
"The tempests forth,—what ports a shelter gave.
"To Delos was I bound, and, in my course,
"Touched on the shores of Dia. From my bark
"Beached safely, lightly on the sandy marge
"I leaped and landed. So the night I spent.
"With the first blush of morn, for water fresh

" My crew I sent, and where to find it showed.
" Myself, upon a hillock posted, watched
" A favouring wind, and, as it rose, recalled
" My comrades to their toil. 'Here are we!' cried
" Opheltes, stoutest of the band, and showed
" A prize—for so he deemed—a youth, of form
" Girl-like, amid the lonely fields surprised.
" Half overcome he seemed with sleep and wine,
" And scarce could follow. But his garb, his gait,
" His air, seemed more than mortal. 'In that form,'
" I cried, 'I know not who, but sure some God
" 'Is hidden! Whosoe'er thou art, our toils
" 'Deign with success to crown, and these rude hands
" 'That seized thee, pardon!' 'Spare for us thy prayers!'
" Quoth Dictys, than whom none of all my crew
" Quicker the mast would climb, or lighter glide
" Down the taut rope to deck. They joined him all,—
" Libys,—Melanthus,—sharpest on the prow
" To keep look-out,—Alcimedon,—and he
" Who gave the oars their time, and stroke, and rest,
" Epopeus,—and the others:—so the greed
" Of booty stirred their sordid souls. 'Forbear!'
" I cried—'tis I am Master here! Such freight
" 'Unhallowed never ship of mine shall bear!'
" And urged to set him free. Of all the crew
" Most mutinous was Lycabas, who paid
" In exile for some deed of murder done
" Erewhile, in Tuscan land. Up insolent
" He sprang, and struck me in the throat. The blow
" Beneath the waves had hurled me, but a rope
" Caught me, as stunned I reeled, and saved the fall.

IX. "But, as the brutal act the unruly band
"Applauding shouted, Bacchus—for himself
"It was—from lethargy of sleep and wine
"Roused by the fray, awoke. 'What is't ye do?
"'What means this cry?' he said. 'How came I here?
"'Where would ye take me, sailors?' 'Have no fear,'
"Melanthus answered,—'to what port thou wilt
"'We bear thee! only name it!' 'Naxos then!'
"Returned the God, 'where I shall find my home,
"'And ye a welcome. Steer for Naxos!'—Loud
"By Ocean and all Gods the liars swore
"Compliance, and impatient urged to sail.
"Naxos to starboard lay, and starboard straight
"Our course I held. 'What! art thou mad?' cried one,
"'What folly this?' another. This with sign
"Threatening, and this with whispered menace, bade
"Larboard to steer. 'Take then who will the helm!'
"I answered—'not to fraud and wrong this hand
"'Its art shall lend!' Around me pressed the crew
"Murmuring and cursing:—'Fool!' Æthalion cried,
"'Think'st thou no hand save thine can steer?' and leaped
"Quick to my place and office, and our course
"Reversed, and right away from Naxos held.

X. "Upon the poop stood Bacchus. On the Sea
"He looked, and inly smiling to perceive
"The purposed fraud, and like to one who wept,
"'Not this,' he said, 'O mariners, the shore
"'Ye promised, or I sought. What have I done
"'This wrong to merit? Little praise is theirs
"'Who with superior strength and numbers league

" 'To cheat a solitary boy!' My tears
" Flowed as he spoke, but at my grief the crew
" Unpitying mocked, and onward urged our course
" With sweep of eager oars. By Him I swear—
" For mightier Deity I know not—what
" Remains to tell is true as it is strange
" And seeming past belief! Sudden the bark
" In the mid Ocean stopped, and rested, still
" As in the dock of some great arsenal
" Stands an unfinished hulk. The oars they ply
" In vain, in vain the canvas spread. Around
" The blades green ivy tendrils creep, and curl,
" And all the sails with clustering berries shroud.
" Crowned visible, with purple coronet
" Of grapes, the God stands manifest, his spear
" Wreathed with the leafage of the vine. Strange forms
" Of beasts around him fawn,—tiger, and lynx,
" And panther,—unsubstantial all, yet fierce
" In seeming. Terrified, or mad, the crew
" Plunge headlong in the waves. First Medon leaped,
" And, as he leaped, his back contracting bent
" And curved, with fishy shape, and sprouting fin.
" 'What change is this?' cried Lycabas:—his mouth
" Even as he spoke grew broader, and his nose
" Flattened, and hard and shining scales his skin
" Encrusted. Libys, at his leaden oar
" Still labouring obstinate, the hands he strained
" Contracting felt, and now no hands at all
" He had, but merely fins. This strove a rope
" To grasp, and lo! no arms he found, and dwarfed
" In size and shape sprang overboard, and showed,

" Ere yet he sank, a tail which like the horns
" Of Luna cloven curved. On either side
" They plunged, and dived, and rose again, and shook
" The salt spray from their sides, and seemed to weave
" Some choral measure mystic, as in sport
" From their wide nostrils spouting high the brine.
" But now our crew was twenty men :—I stood
" The sole survivor,—trembling, shivering, all
" My senses lost in terror !—' Fear not thou !'
" He cried, and gave me heart :—' for Naxos steer !'
" For Naxos straight I steered :—and ever thence
" Serve grateful at the altars of the God."
" Fine tale, and subtly stuffed with circumstance
" Of wonders,"—Pentheus sneered—" so with mere length
" To weary down my wrath ! Quick ! Bear him hence !
" And with all pangs ye can devise to Styx
" Dismiss him !" Thence they bore him, and fast-bound
In dungeon laid, while for his death the fire
Was lit, the iron heated. But the doors,
So runs the tale, spontaneous, of his cell
Flew wide, and from his arms the fetters dropped
Loosed by no mortal hand ! Echion's son
Meanwhile, of purpose obstinate, no more
To others trusts his vengeance, but himself
Cithæron seeks, where yet, o'er all the mount
Resounding, wild the Bacchic chorus rang.
And as the trumpet-call to battle stirs
The war-horse, burning for the strife, so him
Those frantic shrieks that shook the throbbing air
Excited, and with fiercer fury filled.

Mid-high upon the mountain lay a spot
Where the thick woods that darkened base and peak
Disparted, and unshadowed left a knoll
Conspicuous far and wide. There Pentheus stood,
And with unholy eye upon the rite
Mysterious gazed. Agave's glance was first
To mark him:—first, with frenzy fired her hand
The thyrsus whirled, and, by a mother's blow
First wounded bled the son! "Io!" she yelled,
"Io! help, sisters both! The Boar is here
"That wastes our fields! Help me the boar to slay!"
With answering yell around him swarms the band
Shrieking and striking! Trembling, all too late
He sees and owns his error:—abject now
He prays, who threatened late:—"Autonoe! save
"Thy sister's child!—Is then Actæon's fate
"So soon forgotten?" Vain appeal! That name
She knows not now, but, as he prays, she lops
From his shorn side his better hand:—the left
By Ino's stroke is severed:—neither now
May serve his parent's pity to implore!
Yet still he rears his trunk dismembered—"See,
"Mother!" he shrieks, "'tis I, thy son!" Fierce howled
Agave at the sight:—frantic her head
She waved, and,—all her tresses to the winds
Wild streaming,—on him rushed, and with red hand
Tore from the mangled trunk his head! "Rejoice!"
She yells—"Rejoice! The victory at last
"Is ours!"—And, as the autumn wind the leaves.
Loosened with early frost, from branch and twig

Whirls scattered, so his body, limb from limb,
By that mad rout lay piecemeal rent and torn.
So, by that lesson taught, the maids of Thebes
The might of Bacchus learned, till now unknown,
And on his altars smoked their incense due.

THE

METAMORPHOSES

OF

PUBLIUS OVIDIUS NASO

BOOK IV.

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I. One yet, of Minyan blood, Alcithoë, dared
His rites decry, boldly his birth from Jove
Disputing,—and to like impiety
Her sisters won. To solemn festival
The Priest had summoned all the folk, and bade
Mistress and maid their daily tasks lay by,
And don the furry vest, and from their hair
The fillet doff, for garland, loosely wreathed
Amid its floating tresses, and in hand
The ivied thyrsus bear, or dread the wrath
Avenging of the slighted Deity.
Matron and maid obey him. Idle lie
The basket and the loom's unfinished work:
And, 'mid the fume of incense piled, the God
By all his names they greet. Bacchus! they hail,
And Bromius! Son of Fire! Begotten twice,
Twice born! Thyoneus of the downy cheek
Unrazored! Nyseus! and Lyæus! Lord
And Author of the kindly gladsome grape!

Nyctelius! and Iacchus! Eleleus!
And Evan! and whatever title else
Of honour all the varying tongues of Greece
Allow thee, Liber! Thou, whom youthful bloom
Unfading decks, perpetual Boy!—in Heaven
Fairest among the Gods, and when thy brow
That hornèd badge of Ammon's blood not wears,
A very Girl in beauty! Thee the East
Its Victor owns, far as the extremest wave
Of Ganges laves the shores of swarthy Ind!
Thy wrath it was, O awful Lord! that smote
Pentheus, and rash Lycurgus with his axe
Unhallowed!—'twas thy power to fishes changed
Those Tuscan mariners. Thou know'st to rule
The golden-harnessed leopard pair, that drag
The chariot, round whose wheels the Bacchants throng
And Satyrs, and Silenus old,—his steps
With wine uncertain hardly with his staff
Sustained, or with huge effort on the ass
That bears him balanced. Wheresoe'er thou mov'st
Round thee the youthful chorus rings, the chant
Of women swells, the clashing cymbal clangs,
And shrill with lengthened hollow pipes the flute.
Kindly and gracious look on us!—So prayed
The daughters of the Theban state. But close
The Minyads sate within, and with their toils
Marred obstinate the festival, and wound
The skein, and plied the loom, and ceaseless wove
The pattern, and their hand-maids to like thrift
Unsparing urged. But one, as with light hand
Her thread she drew, stopped sudden, and, "While thus,"

She said, "the idle rout upon these rites
"Newfangled gapes, why should not we, who serve
"With worthier work Minerva's worthier power,
"With various legend ease our toil, and each
"In turn recite some story, which our task
"May lighten, and more quickly speed the hours?"
All the proposal hailed, and her the first
The sisters bade begin. But she what tale
Of all her store—for many a tale she knew,—
Doubted to choose:—whether of Dercĕtis
The Babylonian, still in scaly form
Believed to haunt the lakes of Palestine;—
Or how her greater daughter soared transformed
To Dove, and on the gleaming turret-tops
Wore out the years yet left her:—how, by spell
Of magic chant or potent herb, the youth
Who loved her Naïs into voiceless fish
Changed cruel, till herself like fate o'ertook:—
Or how the tree, whose fruit of old was white,
To purple changed its berries tinged with blood.
This last, less known, she chose, and, as the wool
She plied with nimble finger, thus began.

II. "Thisbe and Pyramus, through all the East
"Of youths and maidens fairest far, in homes
"Contiguous, in that Town whose walls of brick
"Fame to Semiramis ascribes, were born,
"And grew; and neighbourhood acquaintance bred,
"And Time to Love acquaintance warmed, and Love
"To wedlock-rite aspired. But either Sire
"Forbade what Sire could never yet forbid.

"An equal passion fired the pair:—no need
"Of confidant or go-between:—a look,
"A gesture served in lieu of speech:—the flame
"Closely confined, confined more fiercely burned.
"It chanced that in the wall which house from house
"Divided, by the careless architect
"O'erlooked, a chink there ran, for years unmarked
"Of either household. But the eyes of Love
"Are quick to see:—Ye saw it, loving pair!
"And through that narrow channel, unobserved,
"Passed many a whisper sweet and murmured vow,
"And many a passionate breath by each was caught,
"On this side or on that. 'Oh! envious wall!'
"So would they chide. 'Why thus two lovers true
"'Dissever? Why these arms, which long to clasp
"'Each other, thwart? or not sufficient space
"'For meeting lips allow? But for thus much
"'We thank thee, not ungrateful, that what bliss
"'Is ours to thee we owe, and Love in words
"'At least may speak!'—so ran their idle plaint,
"And with the eve came parting, and farewell,
"And empty kisses pressed on either side
"That never met. Soon as the shades of Night
"Aurora scattered, and the Sun from herb
"And leaf the rime had melted, there they met:
"And, when first interchange of whispered vow
"And plaint had passed, resolved, when sleep should bind
"The eyes of either household, with swift flight
"Silent their homes to quit, and leave behind
"The city:—and, lest each the other miss
"In idle wanderings lost, at Ninus' tomb

"Their trysting-place they fixed. The spot a fount
"Cool falling, and an ancient mulberry,
"Bending with weight of snowy berries, marked.
"So, plighting faith, they parted. Slow the day
"Seemed in the wave to sink, and slow the night
"Seemed from the wave to rise. But, with the dark,
"Noiseless the maiden's hand the portal's bolt
"Withdrew, nor waked one sleeper. Veiled she passed,
"And through the darkness to the tomb and tree
"Appointed held her way:—Love gave her force.
"But, at that very time, a lioness,
"Dripping with gore of slaughtered oxen, sought
"The fount; and Thisbe, as the beast she saw
"Clear in the moonlight, to a cave which stood
"Hard by in terror flying, in her flight
"Her mantle dropped. The lioness,—her thirst
"With copious draught assuaged—and to her lair
"Returning,—saw the robe, and tossed, and tore,
"And marked with crimson stain. Now to the tryst
"Comes Pyramus, and white with terror sees
"The savage foot-prints in the sand, and finds
"The gory garment. 'Then one night,' he cries,
"'Shall end us both! Ah! longer, happier days
"'Thou should'st have seen, my Thisbe! That I live
"'Is guilt! 'Tis I have murdered thee! 'Twas I,
"'I, thoughtless of the danger and the dark,
"'Who bade thee seek this fatal spot, nor first
"'Was here from harm to guard thee! Drag me too
"'Ye lions to your lair, and limb from limb
"'With ravening jaw this guilty body rend!
"'Cowards may pray for death;—the braver soul

" 'Commands it!' To the trysting-tree he bore
" With many a tear, and many a kiss, the robe
" Familiar, and 'My blood, mine too,' he cried,
" 'Must stain thee deeper yet!' and from his side
" He snatched and in his bosom plunged his sword,
" And, as his dying hand the steel withdrew,
" Forth like a fountain gushed the blood,—as spirts
" From conduit-pipe the flood, what time its force
" To bursting wears the channel's leaden side,—
" And spouted high in air. The deadly spray
" Darkened the pendent berries, and the tree
" Soaked to its root in gore, with answering hue
" Thenceforth of crimson tinged the fruit it bore.
" But now, all trembling yet, in fear to miss
" Her lover, back comes Thisbe, and around
" With anxious glances seeks, and burns to tell
" What danger late she ran. Is this the tree
" She left? What change is this? These berries sure
" Are darker far. So hesitating,—stretched
" On earth, and throbbing yet, that bleeding form
" Catches her eye, and back she starts, with cheek
" Paler than box-leaf, and through all her frame
" A shudder thrills—such shiver as the breast
" Of Ocean stirs, when some unlooked-for breeze
" Wrinkles its glassy surface. All too soon
" She knows her Love, and wild with piercing cry
" Her snowy bosom beats, and scattering wide
" Her tresses rent, and flinging round the corse
" Her white arms,—mingling with his blood her tears,
" As if her grief might stanch its flow, with kiss
" On kiss—ah! vainly on that icy cheek

" Imprinted, 'Pyramus!' she shrieks, 'what chance
" 'Thus robs me of thee? Pyramus! look up
" 'And answer me! O hear me! speak! 'Tis I,
" 'Tis Thisbe calls!' He heard the name, and strove
" Feebly his dying eyes to raise, and saw
" Yet once again his Love, and with the sight
" Closed them for ever. But that mantle red
" With gore, that scabbard void of sword, too well
" Told all the tale—'Twas then thy proper hand,
" 'Thy Love,' she cried, 'that brought thee to this end
" 'Unhappy! But mine own, though weak it be,
" 'Can imitate thy deed! I too have loved,
" 'And Love will give me strength enough to die!
" 'For think not I survive thee! She who caused
" 'Thy death, will share it, and the only Fate
" 'That had the power to part us, joins us yet.
" 'This only, O ye wretched Sires who gave
" 'To either birth, our dying breath implores:—
" 'Grudge not to those whom Love and Death conjoined
" 'Such union still, and grant one common tomb!
" 'And thou, O tree, beneath whose shadow lies
" 'One hapless corse, where two shall lie ere long,
" 'Live thou our story's evidence, and bear
" 'With fruit of darksome hue, for sorrow meet,
" 'Eternal witness of our double doom!'
" She said, and, pointed to her breast, drove deep
" The blade yet reeking with that earlier Death.
" And Gods and Parents heard her prayer. The tree
" With blackest fruit yet teems; and what the Pyre
" Left unconsumed rests mingled in one Urn."

III. She ceased, and, with short pause, Leuconoë next
Took up the tale,—and all the rest were still.
" Yon God," she said, " whose lustre regulates
" The life and labour of the World, hath known
" What 'tis to love. That Love shall be my theme.
" He first, 'tis said, the adulterous commerce spied
" Of Mars and Venus :—like enough—for first
" What may be seen he sees :—and angry bore
" To the wronged son of Jupiter the tale
" Of his dishonoured bed, and where and when
" To prove it, showed. Astounded Vulcan stood,
" And from his grasp whatever handiwork
" He held, let fall :—but, quickly rousing, wrought
" Strange network, chain and link and mesh of steel,
" So delicate that scarce might eye perceive
" Its substance ;—finest thread, or subtlest web
" Of spider pendent from the roof, compared
" Showed coarse and clumsy ;—flexible to yield
" To lightest touch or pressure :—and around
" The chamber spread the snare. The Lovers sought
" The wonted couch, and, as with guilty clasp
" They met, upon them closed the toils. The God
" Flung wide the ivory doors, and all the Powers
" Of Heaven to witness summoned. There they lay
" Embracing. ' Ah ! ' some God of livelier turn
" Cried sudden—' would 'twere I to be so shamed ! '
" And all the rest in laughter broke,—and long
" The tale found raciest gossip for the skies.
" But Cythereia vows revenge :—in turn
" The Informer who that lawless love betrayed
" By Love must smart. Nor form, nor heat, nor ray,

"Hyperion's child, may help thee here! The globe
"Who burns with fire, with novel fire himself
"Must burn:—the impartial gaze which over all
"Should watch alike, one virgin figure now
"Engrosses, and Leucothoë only claims
"The eyes thou ow'st the world. Earlier to rise,
"Later to set,—what reck'st thou of the chill
"Of winter-day prolonged, so longer thou
"That beauty canst behold? till faint, thy face
"Partakes the weakness of thy soul, and fades
"And terrifies with sudden Night the World.
"They err who say that Luna, 'twixt thy orb
"And Earth intruding, pales thee:—'tis with Love
"Thy cheeks are wan:—such love as never yet
"Or Clymene, or Rhodos, or who gave
"Ææan Circe birth, or Clytie,—now
"Despised but loving still,—within thy soul
"Awoke:—such wound, as never in that breast
"Till now hath smarted. 'Tis Leucothoë drives
"From memory all those earlier loves of thine,—
"Leucothoë, whom Eurynome, the flower
"Of all Arabia's perfumed daughters, bore,
"Erelong as far her Mother's fame to pass
"For beauty, as her Mother passed the rest.
"Her father, Orchamus, from Belus seventh
"In line, the cities ruled, which in old time
"Achæmenes had swayed: and 'neath those skies
"Were stalled the horses of the Sun, with food
"Ambrosial nourished, so their daily force
"Expended for the morrow to renew.
"'Twas Night,—and now the heavenly nutriment

" The heavenly steeds recruited,—when the God,
" Veiled in the semblance of Eurynome
" Her mother, sought her bower. Her hand-maids twelve
" Sate spinning by the portal. With such kiss
" As mothers use the Maid he greets. ' Give place !
" ' Damsels ! ' he cries—' a mother with her child
" ' Would speak what fits not other ears to hear.
" ' Leave us to talk alone ! ' They went, and left
" Phœbus within. ' That God am I,' he cried,
" ' Who measure out the year,—who all things see,—
" ' Myself the eye of the world, whereby all things
" ' It sees. I love thee !'—From her trembling hand
" Distaff and spindle dropped :—but fear itself
" Her charms enhanced. Instant the God resumed
" His wonted form and beauty. How should Maid
" By such great presence awed, by suit like this
" Solicited, resist ?—The field was won
" Unfought. But jealous Clytie heard the tale,
" Clytie, for whom but late with fiercest fire
" The God had burned; and, impotent to brook
" A rival, published wide her shame, and bore
" To the Sire's ears the scandal. Stern he heard
" And ruthless. Madly to the Sun she flung
" Her hands appealing—' Let Himself,' she cried,
" ' Confess, he forced me ! ' All was vain ! Alive
" They dragged her to her grave, and o'er her form
" Yet warm and breathing heaped the smothering earth.
" Too late Hyperion's son that sentence knew,
" And scattered wide the clods that held her down,
" And tore to light the buried corse :—no more
" The head he loved that bloodless corse could raise.

"Since Phaëton was blasted, never sight,
"They say, to deeper anguish moved the God
"Who guides the steeds of Day. Not all the heat
"Of all his rays avails that frigid form
"To warm anew to life. The Fates forbid
"The effort. But, upon the spot which held
"The cold remains, a copious shower he pours
"Of Nectar, and, deep-sighing, 'To the skies
"'Yet shalt thou rise!' he said. The body's frame
"Dissolved in that celestial flood:—the Earth
"Sweet odours breathed; and gradual from the tomb
"A slender plant its head upreared, and filled
"With spicy fragrance all the air around.

IV. "But never more,—though Love for Rage might plead
"Excuse, and Rage for fault,—the Lord of Day
"To Clytie came in kindness;—never more
"His arms embraced her. From that hour she pined
"Unloved, yet madly loving,—nor endured
"The converse of her fellows; day and night
"Upon the bare cold Earth bare-headed couched,
"Unkempt, and motionless. So nine long days
"And nights she lay. Nor crumb of food, nor drop
"Of water touched her lips, save the dank dews
"Of Heaven and her own tears:—her failing gaze
"Fixed ever on the passing God, his course
"Following athwart the sky. So Earth, they say,
"Whereon she lay, her pallid form absorbed
"And in pale leaf renewed and flower,—nor pale
"Throughout, but with a tender purple tinged
"And like to violet in its hue,—whose root,

" Fixed, yet allows it with the turning Sun
" To turn, and still, so changed, its Love declare."

V. So ran Leuconoë's tale,—and all who heard
Marvelled :—these deemed it false ; and those the power
Of Gods sufficient for such wonder held,—
Gods old and true—not Gods like Bacchus there !
And next Alcithoë, for her sisters twain
Held silence, plying still with nimble hand
The shuttle, spoke. " I pass "—she said—" the tale
" Of Daphnis by the jealous nymph to stone
" On Ida turned—(such rage hath passion scorned :—)

VI. " And Scython's doubtful sex, now held for man,
" For woman now, as varying Nature changed :—

VII. " And Celmis, erst of youthful Jove beloved,
" A statue now :—how from the rains of Heaven

VIII. " The Cretan race was born :—and to what flowers
" Crocos and Smilax both together bloomed
" Transformed :—a newer tale may better please.

IX. " Whence sprang the evil fame of Salmacis
" Yet noted,—why her weakening waves unman
" The limbs they touch,—listen and learn. The cause
" Few know, but all the effect. On Ida's slopes
" The Naiads in their caverns nursed the child
" Of Aphrodite erst to Hermes born,
" In lineament and feature, as in name,
" Expressing either Parentage. For years

" Thrice five content amid those fostering shades
" He grew;—but then the roaming fancy seized
" And urged him forth, wherever unexplored
" Lay realm, or river rolled untracked:—the joy
" Of travel paid the toil. So, through the towns
" Of Lycia journeying, o'er the Carian bounds
" He passed, and halted by a fountain's marge
" Pellucid to its depths; nor barren sedge,
" Nor water-flag, nor spear of tapering reed
" Its glassy surface broke,—but round its brim
" The soft turf sloped with herbage ever green.
" A Nymph its waters haunted,—not of those
" Who bend the bow, or swift of foot the deer
" Pursue,—alone of all the Naiad band
" In Dian's train not counted. Oft the maid
" Her sisters urged—'Fie! Salmacis! With us
" 'Javelin and quiver take, and in the chase
" 'Shake off this idle languor!'—Never she
" Javelin or quiver took, but in the fount
" Now laved her delicate limbs, or now with comb
" Sleeking her locks, in that fair mirror learned
" What order best became them. Lightly clad
" On couch of leaves, or softest grass, she lay,
" Or flowers herself had gathered. Gathering flowers,
" The youth she saw, and burned for; but, his steps
" Eager to meet, not crossed, till first she draped
" In seemly fold her mantle, and her locks
" Artful composed and marshalled all her charms.
" 'O loveliest Boy!'—she cried—'whose form some God
" 'Betokens sure—if mortal, blest are they
" 'The Parents both who gave thee birth, and blest

" ' Thy brothers and thy sisters, if such kin
" ' Thou hast, and blest the Nurse who at her breast
" ' Suckled thine infant lips!—More blest than all
" ' She whom thy love may hail thy bride!—If such
" ' There live—might I be happy in her wrong!
" ' If not—might I be such! My husband be!'
" O'er all his cheek the crimson flushed, what Love
" Might mean unknowing yet;—but so the blush
" Became him, as the colour to the fruit
" Ripening gives beauty,—so the ivory glows
" With Tyrian purple tinged,—so Luna's face
" Through paleness reddens, when the cymbal's clang
" With idle help would aid her labouring hour.
" ' Nay, grant me then at least a Brother's kiss!'
" She cries, and round his ivory neck her arms
" Would fling embracing:—but the Boy ' Desist!'
" Exclaims—' or straight the spot and thee I quit!'
" The threat alarms the nymph. ' Nay—rest thee here
" ' Fair Guest!' she cried, and, slow retiring, still
" With glance behind her cast, made show to leave
" The place, and in the neighbouring thicket crouched,
" And watched him still. But, boylike, he now here
" Now there the spot explores, and, unobserved—
" Or so he thinks—tries with unsandalled foot
" The margin of the fount, and now, allured
" By the fresh coolness, doffs his vest, and stands
" Exposed in all his beauty. On the sight
" Inflamed looked Salmacis, with eyes that glowed
" As glows the orb of Phœbus back to Heaven
" From mirror bright reflected. Passionate
" She gazes, scarce forbearing with quick rush

" To clasp him as he stands, and in those arms
" Sigh out the love that maddens all her soul.
" Clapping his sides, the Boy with sudden plunge
" Dives in the fount, and now to right now left
" His lithe arms plying swims, below the wave
" Seen fair as ivory statue, cased in glass,
" And white as lily of the silver lake.
" 'Now art thou mine!' she cries, and swift disrobed
" Springs after in the flood, and clasps the form
" That struggles vainly for release, and wrests
" Unwilling kisses from his lips, and holds
" Prisoned his hands, and, breast to bosom pressed,
" Embracing clings and clips him. When the bird
" Of Jove aloft hath borne some serpent, so
" The pendent reptile, upward writhing, twines
" Round beak and claw, and with strong coiling tail
" Fetters and baffles all his breadth of wings:—
" So clings the ivy to the forest oak:—
" So clutches with encircling tentacles
" The Polypus his prey. But still the Boy
" Resists, nor all her fire avails to wake
" Responsive warmth, nor all his force to loose
" The clasp that to her body locks his own.
" 'Ah! obstinate!'—she cries—'Strive as thou wilt,
" 'Never I let thee go! I would the Gods
" 'For ever thus would link us!'—Gods there were,
" It seemed, who heard; for, as she spoke, her form
" With his incorporate blent:—the Two were One
" In single shape united!—Thus the slip
" Blends grafted with the stock, thenceforth to grow
" Part of itself. So, strangely fused, the pair

" Nor two nor one appeared. Nor boy nor maid
" Distinct was there :—neither, yet both, It seemed !
" But thus when he, who in the wave a Man
" Had sprung, found half his manhood lost, and felt
" His feebler force of limb,—with trebler voice
" Than fits a male,—his suppliant hands he raised,
" And 'O'—he cried,—'Mother and Sire ! Gods both,
" ' Who gave Hermaphroditus birth and name,
" ' Grant him this too ! and let what man soe'er
" ' Bathes after in this flood, come forth, as I,
" ' Weak, womanish, but half a man !' So prayed,
" Doubtful or double now of sex, the youth ;
" And either Parent heard, and at his prayer
" Gave to the fount the mystic power it owns."

X. So closed their tales :—and still the Minyads plied
Their toil, and scorned the God, and mocked his feast.
When sudden round their heads with fearful clang
Invisible cymbals seemed to clash, and horn
To blow, and trump to bray. A gust of myrrh
And crocus filled the place, and,—prodigy
Well-nigh too strange for credence,—sudden green
Of ivy woof and warp o'erspread :—the wool
Budded in twig and leaf :—the threads they drew
In tendrils curled ;—and berry and bunch of vine
O'er all the loom in purple clusters glowed.
'Twas at that twilight hour, nor day nor night,
When light and darkness meet. The massive walls
Rocked as with Earthquake ;—glare of lamp and torch
Through all the palace flamed ;—and fearful shapes
Of spectral beasts around them seemed to howl !

Trembling the Sisters separate fly, and each,
Apart, some lurking-place by that fierce blaze
Unlighted strives to gain. But, as she hides,
Strange, delicate, membranous, a subtle film
Her shrunken limbs o'erspreads, with thinnest down
Clothing her wing-like arms. How all the change
Was wrought of shape and nature, not themselves
Could, in the darkness, tell;—the change alone
They know. No feathers have they, yet they fly
Borne on transparent pinions. For all speech,
Such twitter as their tiny form befits
Must serve them now. With feeblest shriek their plaint
They utter; nor in woods, but round the roofs
And haunts of men flit nightly:—foes to Noon,
And friends of Eve,—of Vesper justly named.

XI. So through all Thebes the fame of Bacchus spread
And waxed,—and Ino far and wide proclaimed
Her Nephew's might. Of all her Sisters, she
Alone no grief had known, save such as touched
Through them herself. But now, her insolence
Of Motherhood, and Queenly place by side
Of Athamas, and the pround vaunt that claimed
A God her nursling, Juno brooked no more.
"The Harlot-born!"—she cried—"And shall He whelm
"And change in Ocean that Mæonian crew,—
"Bid a mad mother's hands infuriate tear
"The vitals of her child,—and to strange flight
"The metamorphosed Minyads doom,—and I,
"Juno, be powerless save to weep my wrongs?
"Must I with that content me? Is that all

"My privilege?—Himself instructs me. Foes
"From foes may learn a lesson! How the force
"Of frenzy works, too well the bloody fate
"Of Pentheus hath declared. Why should not she
"Be stirred to equal rage, and emulate
"Herself the mad examples of her Kin?"
A way there is that to the nether World
Slopes downward,—silent,—dark with noxious yew,—
By Stygian vapours dull o'erhung;—by this
The shades of those, whom recent sepulture
Descent allows, descend:—whereof deprived
Ignorant they wander, nor the path may find
To Hades and the gloomy realm of Dis.
White, as with winter, lies the dreary road.
To the dark city of Styx a thousand paths
Conduct; its gates stand open all around:
And, even as Ocean all the river-floods
Of Earth absorbs, so all the souls that erst
Were Men are gathered there. Its space for all
Suffices,—by whatever throng may come
Uncrowded. Bloodless, boneless, bodiless,
The phantoms through it roam. The Forum some,
The infernal Palace some frequent:—what art
In life they practised most, with empty show
Of imitation, ply. The rest the doom,
Their evil deeds on Earth have won, endure.
Not all its terrors from that path the Queen
Of Jove deterred;—such spur have wrath and hate.
Downward from Heaven she sped. The Hound of Hell
The sacred presence on the threshold saw,
And reared his triple head, and thrice at once

Howled greeting. Straight the daughters of old Night,
Dread Sister-powers, severe, implacable,
She sought, where, by a dungeon-door, fast closed
With bars of adamant, they sate, and combed
The black snakes from their brows. They, as they knew
Amid the gloom the Goddess, reverent rose.
"The Place of Crime" that spot was called. There, spread
O'er nine wide acres, Tityus groaning gave
His entrails to the vultures.—From the lips
Of Tantalus the baffling waters slipped,
The mocking fruit was blown.—Ixion there
Whirled ever, self pursuing and pursued,
Upon his restless wheel.—The Belides,
Red with their cousin-husbands' blood, their urns
Dipped ceaseless, never filled.—Saturnia's glance
Marked all, but longest on Ixion dwelt.
Turning from him to Sisyphus,—"Of all
"His Brothers," cried she, "Why should this alone
"Perpetual pangs endure, and Athamas,
"With that proud wife of his, in regal state
"Me and my power contemn?"—With this, the cause
She opens of her journey and her hate,
And what the boon she from the Sisters seeks,—
How Cadmus' house may fall, and Athamas
May perish, plunged in ruin and in crime.
With promise and with prayer, imperious both,
Her cruel suit she pressed. Tisiphone
Shook her dishevelled locks, and from her brows
The blinding snakes flung back. "Whate'er thou wilt,"
She said,—"without more idle waste of words,
"Conclude it done! and to a purer air

"Than ours from this unlovely realm return."
Gladly the Goddess turned:—and, at Heaven's gate
Thaumantian Iris met her, and with dew
Of lustral water sprinkled as she passed.
Nor long Tisiphone delays, with torch
Blood-steeped, and mantle red with dripping gore,
Girdled with twining serpents, from the realm
Of darkness issuing forth. Sorrow her steps
And Fear, and Terror, and the restless eye
Of Madness close attend. Her dread approach
The Æolian palace felt, and through its range
Of columns trembled;—all its portals, white
With maple, paler grew. The Sun his beams
Withdrew. Astonished at such portent, forth
Sprang Ino and her Lord; but at the gate
The Fury barred their passage. Wide she spread
Her arms with viperous bracelet wreathed, and shook
Her fearful locks; and, from her brows, and o'er
Her shoulders, hissed the angered snakes, and spat
Red venom from their flickering tongues. Of these
Two from her head she rends, and at the breast
Of each hurls baneful. Round the pair they cling
And curl, and with no visible bite infuse
Their fury;—'tis the mind alone they wound.
Nor this is all. With liquid poison armed
She comes, compounded of all horrors,—foam
Wiped from the jaws of Cerberus, or shed
From fell Echidna's maw,—all wanderings wild
Of soul,—Oblivion's darkness,—crimes and tears
And rage and thirst of slaughter,—with fresh blood
Commingled all and blent,—and with green juice

Of hemlock new-distilled :—and o'er them both
This too she flings, and to the inmost heart
Of each the venom speeds, and last, her torch
Around them wild, in blazing orb of flame
Continuous whirling, sight and sense confounds :
And so, her errand done, the shadowy realms
Of Dis returning seeks, and for a while
Unclasps the twining serpents of her zone.
But frantic now the son of Æolus
Through all his palace raged. "Io!" he shouts—
"Quick comrades, with your toils! a Lioness
"With her twin whelps within this forest lurks!
"Lo! there she prowls!" And frenzied on his spouse
He springs, and from the mother's bosom tears
The infant, that with innocent hands outstretched
Smiles on his Sire—Learchus,—and, like stone
In sling, round spins him twice and once, and whirls
Against a flinty rock the baby-limbs
Mangled and crushed. But Ino, by that sight
Of horror, or the venom late infused,
To equal fury fired, with sudden howl
Fled maddened :—wild behind her streamed her hair.
The child yet left her, Melicerta, high
Aloft her bare arms bore. "Evohe!" she shrieked,
"Evohe! Bacchus!"—Juno heard the name
And laughed to hear :—"So let the Nursling pay
"His Nurse!" she said. High o'er the Deep a cliff
Projecting frowned :—its base the waves had scooped
And arched in dome of shelter, where no shower
Of Heaven could penetrate :—its beetling brow
The middle sea o'erhung. That dizzy height,

With strength and speed by madness lent, the Queen
Surmounting, with herself the child she bore
Dashed fearless in the flood below. The waves
Foamed white beneath the shock. But Venus saw
Her grandchild's fate unmerited, and sought
With flattering prayer the Brother of her Sire.
"Great God of Seas!" she said, "whose sway next Jove's
"Rules widest, hear me! 'tis no trivial boon
"I ask of thee. Have pity on my race,—
"For mine they are, whom yon Ionian flood
"Whelms drowning in its depths,—and to thy train
"Immortal add them!—I, who from the foam
"Of Ocean sprang, and from such birth my name
"In Greece most honoured take, from Ocean sure
"Such grace may claim!" Old Neptune heard the prayer
And granted. What was mortal into God
He changed, and clothed them with new form, and name,
And honour, such as Deity befits,
And her Leucothoë, him Palæmon, called.
With all the speed they could upon her track
The Theban matrons followed, to the verge
Marked with her latest foot-print. Of her fate
No doubt could linger more. With tresses torn
And mantle rent the fall of Cadmus' house
They wailed, and for too cruel, too unjust
The jealous spouse of Jove arraigned. Such blame
She brooked not. "Cruel am I? Then yourselves
"Shall next approve me so!" The threat and doom
Together fell. Of all the band the first
And faithfullest—"My Mistress in yon waves
"Be mine to follow!" shrieked, and would have leaped

And could not! Rooted to the cliff she stood!
A second sudden felt the arms that strove
To beat her breast grow rigid. This her hands
Spread to the Sea appealing, and her hands
In marble fixed were spread. This tore her locks,
And in her locks her stony fingers froze.
All gesture and all motion, as they stood,
Was petrified. A few, to birds transformed,
Still haunt the cliff and skim the flood below.
But so his child, and hers, to Demi-Gods
Translated Cadmus knew not. Grief on grief
Following, and all the portents that his life
Had witnessed, wore him down. Some angry God
It seemed, that spared himself, his realm had cursed.
And, from the walls his hand had raised, the Chief
Self-exiled, with his spouse, through many lands
Long wandering, at the last Illyria reached:
Where, as, with age and sorrow bowed, the pair
The fate and fortunes of their house reviewed,—
"And if that Snake"—he said—"which erst my spear
"Transfixed, when flying from the Tyrian shore,
"The novel seed of dragon-teeth I sowed,
"Was sacred, and for that the wrath of Heaven
"Thus pitiless pursues me,—in such shape
"May I a serpent crawl!" He spoke, and straight
A serpent crawled! Skin crusted into scale,—
Blue spots distained its darkened hue,—and prone
On Earth he grovelled, with uniting legs
Blent in a tapering tail. Nor yet his arms
Were lost, and those he raised, and down his cheeks
Still human gushed the tears. "Ah! hapless spouse!"

He cried—"Ah! fly me not! while still this hand
"May feel thy pressure, press it! One embrace
"Give yet while aught of man is left, nor all
"This bestial form usurps!" Nor more his tongue
Cloven could speak:—words failed him, and a hiss
Came only in their place:—such voice alone
Was natural now. "Alas!" she shrieks, and beats
Her breast—"Stay! Cadmus, stay! What horrid change
"Transforms thee thus? Resist it! What is this?
"Limb, form, and feature fail thee! As I gaze
"Thou vanishest!—Then me too, O ye Gods,
"Change to like shape!" He, as she spoke, her face
Licked harmless, and with fond familiar coil
Round the loved neck and bosom twined. Aghast
Their train the portent saw. But both—for both
Were Serpents now—with gesture amicable
Of head and lucent neck, their terrors seemed
To deprecate, and glided interlaced
Beneath the neighbouring forest's sheltering shade.
There still they dwell, and, mindful what they were,
Nor shun the face of man, nor work him harm.
Much solace too, even in that altered shape,
To both their grandchild gave:—the Victor-Lord
Of India, honoured now with fane and rite
Through all Achaian realms, save one. Alone
Acrisius yet, of Abas' line, despite
His kindred, blood, and lineage, obstinate
Against him barred his Argive gates, and dared
Withstand the God, and all his claim to birth
From Jupiter deny;—like origin
Even as before to Perseus he denied,

Conceived of Danaë in that golden shower:
Though for both God and Grandchild so disclaimed
Repentance came ere long, when Truth had right,
And this his place in Heaven assumed,—and that,
Proud with the Gorgon Monster's snaky spoil,
The yielding air with resonant pinions clave:
And still, as o'er the Libyan wastes he soared,
Each crimson drop that from it fell the sands
Warmed into life;—and with perennial brood
Of various serpents all the Desert teemed.
  Thence, like some watery cloud of Heaven, by winds
Discordant driven, now here, now there, aloft
Through æther borne, he views the ample field
Of Earth below, and thrice the icy Pole
And thrice the claws of glowing Cancer sees,
And now the East explores, and now the West,
Till waning day at last and closing night
Make perilous his flight, and in the realms
Of western Atlas brief repose he seeks,
Till Lucifer Aurora wake, and waked
Aurora mount once more her morning-car.
  Hugest of human race was Atlas, sprung
Of old Iapetus, to whom the bounds
Of Earth and Sea were subject, where the Sun
Downward to Ocean guides his panting steeds
And in the wave his glowing axle cools.
  A thousand fleecy flocks, a thousand herds
His pastures roamed secure:—his ample realm
No neighbours vexed;—its golden groves with leaves
Of gold perpetual bloomed, and golden fruit.
"O Thou," quoth Perseus,—"whom I fain would call

"My Host, if glorious birth thou prizest, mine
"I boast from Jove:—if tale of hero-deeds
"More please thee,—mine methinks may well repay
"What rest I ask and shelter."—But the King
Mindful of that oracular rede which erst
Parnassian Themis spake—"The time shall come,
"O Atlas! when that golden tree a son
"Of Jove shall strip and spoil!"—had girt around
His orchard high with massive walls, and set
Within a monstrous dragon for a guard,
And churlish to all strangers barred his realm.
"Begone!" he cried—"lest all these lies of thine
"Of wonders, and of Jove, avail thee naught!"
Nor threatened only, but with show of force,
Deaf or to fair request or bold demand,
Prepared to thrust him thence. No mortal strength,
He knew, might cope with Atlas in his might.
"Find I so little grace?" he said—"then take
"From me this gift at parting!" and his look
Askance he turned, and from his left arm flashed
Full upon Atlas' face the Gorgon-Head,
With all its horrors:—and the Giant-King
A Giant-Mountain stood! His beard, his hair
Were forests:—into crags his shoulders spread
And arms:—his head the crowning summit towered:—
His bones were granite. So the Fates fulfilled
Their hest;—and all his huge proportions swelled
To vaster bulk, and ample to support
The incumbent weight of Heaven and all its Stars.
Hippotades in their eternal prison
Had caged the Winds, and Lucifer, who wakes

The world to labour, brightly beamed in Heaven,
When now the Youth, to either ankle bound
His feathery wings resumed, and on his thigh
The moony falchion girt, and cleaving light
With oary foot the liquid air, afar
O'er many a realm and many a people flew,
Till down upon the Æthiopian shores,
Of Cepheus ruled, he looked;—where Ammon's wrath
Unjust had doomed Andromeda to pay
Her Mother's boastful insolence of tongue.
Bound by her white arms to the rugged rocks
The Maid he saw:—and were't not for the breeze
That gave her tresses motion, and the tears
That trickled down her pallid cheeks,—had sure
Some marble statue deemed. The sudden fire
Within him burned; and, spell-bound as he gazed
Upon that beauteous vision, scarce his wings
Their office due remembered. "Oh!" he cried—
"What bonds are these, for one whom Love alone
"With softest link should fetter? Speak what name
"Thou bearest,—whence thy birth,—and why these chains?"
Answered him naught the Maid, with virgin-shame,
So seen of man, confused and mute;—her hands,
Had but her bonds allowed, her face had hid:—
Tears only made reply. But, as he still
His question urged, lest silence might for sign
Of conscious gilt be deemed, she faltered forth
Her name and race, and how her Mother's vaunt
Too arrogant of beauty wrought her woe:—
And scarce her tale had ended,—when the waves
Lashed into sudden fury foamed and roared,

And, wallowing huge o'er half the Deep, uprose
The Ocean-Monster to his prey. Her cry
Of terror rang to Heaven. Beside her stood
Her wretched Sire, and, wretched more than he,
And with just cause, her Mother:—helpless both
To aid:—to wail, to weep, to cling around
Her fettered form, was all they could. "A truce
"To tears!" quoth Perseus,—"time enough to weep
"Hereafter may be yours:—for helpful act
"And quick the moment calls. If I, the child
"Of Danaë,—born to Jove, when to her tower
"Veiled in that fruitful rain of gold the God
"Found loving way,—I, Perseus, who the spoil
"Discovered of the Gorgon's snaky locks
"Bear Victor, and athwart the fields of air
"Borne on these wings my fearless course pursue,—
"Were Suitor for your daughter's hand,—I trow
"No rival need I fear! To so much claim
"This service yet, with Jove to aid, I add,—
"And, if I save her, be the Maiden mine!"
Gladly—for who could hesitate?—their faith
They plight, and call on Heaven the bold emprise
To prosper, and their kingdom pledge for dower.
But lo! by this—as some beaked galley's prow
Furrows the Deep by sweating rowers urged,—
Nearer the Monster with his breast's huge bulk
Cleft the disparted waves; and,—from the rock
No farther now than Balearic sling
Through middle air its bullet whirls,—approached.
Sudden the Hero spurns the Earth, and soars
Aloft in air. The shadow of his foe

Cast darkling o'er the flood the Monster sees,
And on it wastes his rage. As when the Bird
Of Jove upon some desert-plain espies
A serpent, sunning in the noontide beam
His glistening length, and from behind the prey
Attacks, ere backward he his deadly fangs
Can turn, and fastens in his scaly neck
His hungry claws,—so Eagle-like through air
Downward upon the beast the Hero swooped,
And through his shoulders, as he raged, the blade
Drove to the hilt. With anguish of that wound
Now high in air the Monster bounds, now deep
Plunges below; now, like a Boar at bay
Hemmed by the yelping pack, his furious jaws
Snap wildly here and there:—the agile wings
Elude his gripe, and on his scaly back
Rough with adhering shells, and where his tail
Tapers to fishy ending, and his sides
And ribs, exposed, give room for stroke to fall,
The falchion deals its deadly wound. A flood
Spouts horrible, of foam and wave and gore
Commingled, from his gaping jaws, and clogs
The Hero's wings with crimson spray. No more
To these he trusts, but on a rock, whose crest
The billows may not reach, his station takes,
And with his left hand grasps the crag, and thrice
And once his weapon to the very heart
Drives of the conquered beast. From all the shore
Applauding shouts ring jubilant to Heaven:
And Cepheus and Cassiope, o'erjoyed,
By that pledged name of Son-in-law the help

And Saviour of their house salute. Unbound
The rescued Maiden stands, of all that risk
Fair cause and guerdon. In the cleansing flood
The Hero laves his bloody hands, and next,
Lest mischief of that snaky trophy come,
On the bare sands exposed, with couch of leaves
And weeds marine he strews the ground, and wraps
From sight Medusa's head. The herbage, green
And sappy yet, through all its pores imbibed
The magic influence of that touch, and froze
And stiffened into stony leaf and stalk.
Wondering the Sea-Nymphs saw,—and with fresh growth
Of Ocean made experiment, and laughed
At like result delighted, and wide strewed
Around their watery realm the novel seeds.
Such changing nature yet the Coral holds,
Hardened in upper air:—what in the wave
Was branch and twig and leaf, on Earth is stone.
Three altars next of turf he rears:—the left
To Hermes; to the Virgin-Queen of War
The right; to Jove the midmost: and a Cow
To Pallas slays, to Mercury a Calf,
And to the Almighty Sire a mighty Bull.
And now, fair guerdon of that bold exploit,
Careless of promised dower, Andromeda
Alone he claims; and Hymen's torch and Love's
In kindled union blaze; the altars waft
To Heaven their incense; every gate with flowers
Is garlanded; and pipe, and horn, and lyre,
And song, and all that speaks a people's joy,
Wake nuptial harmony. The palace opes

Its golden gates; and to the festal board
Of Cepheus fair-arrayed his nobles throng.
And now, when Bacchus' genial gift had warmed
Their souls to freer converse, of their Laws
And Life the Hero asks. Courteous their Guest
Lyncides answers, and, whate'er of use
And wont and rule he questions, fair explains.
And as he ended, "Tell us, in thy turn,
"O bravest of the brave," he said, "what force
"Or art was thine, that serpent-guarded Head
"To win and wear?" And Perseus answering told
How 'neath the snows of Atlas lay a spot,
Fenced round with solid rampart of thick wall,
Beside whose entrance dwelt the sisters twain
Of Phorcys born, who with alternate use
Between them shared but one sole eye, and how
That orb, from one to other passed, his hand
Passing contrived to seize, and with such bribe
Restored the road had learned, by waste, and wild,
And rugged rock, and shaggy wood, to where
Their Sister-Gorgon dwelt; and, on that path
What lifeless shapes of men and beasts he saw
By glance of fell Medusa petrified,
As he himself had been, but for the shield
On his left arm, wherein reflected glared
The mirrored image of the deadly Face
Itself unseen: and how, while sleep alike
The Monster and her serpents bound, he shore
Clean from the trunk its head, and to his will
Subdued the winged speed of Pegasus,
Sprung, with Chrysaor, from the crimson flood

Forth gushing with their mother's life:—and all
The perils of his wondrous journey told,
What seas, what lands, beneath that airy height
Outspread his gaze had viewed, and to what stars
His daring flight had soared:—and, as he ceased,
Too brief to those who listened seemed the tale.
"But how"—one questioned—"came it, that of all
"Her sisterhood, this only with those locks
"Of twining snakes was cursed?" "That story too"
Quoth Perseus, "well may claim your ears. Of old
"Renowned for beauty was she, and her love
"Contending suitors jealous sought:—myself
"Have heard those say who saw, her plenteous hair
"Of all her charms was chiefest. But the Lord
"Of Ocean, as in Pallas' very fane
"She worshipped, forced her. From the sight her eyes
"The outraged Goddess veiling with her shield,
"For guerdon due of such offence, that wealth
"Of curling gold to loathsome vipers changed;
"And still, when most her terrors strike her foes,
"Upon her Ægis wears the snakes she made."

THE

METAMORPHOSES

OF

PUBLIUS OVIDIUS NASO

BOOK V.

THE METAMORPHOSES.

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I. Thus as to Cepheus' peers his tale the son
Of Danaë told, sudden the festal hall
A crowd uproarious filled;—no joyous song
For nuptials meet was there, but clang of arms
And shout of foes. And, like the Ocean stirred
From calm by sudden squall, with all its waves
Upheaved, the banquet into tumult broke.
Author and chief of that rash war, with spear
Brandished of ashen shaft and brazen point,
Came Phineus first.—"Give back my ravished bride!"
He shouted—"or not all thy wings, nor lies
"Of Jove and golden showers, from my revenge
"Shall shield thee!" And his hand the spear had hurled,
But Cepheus stayed him. "Art thou mad?" he cried,
"My Brother!—Wherefore this? What frenzy prompts
"Such deed of foulest wrong? Is this the meed
"Such gallant help hath merited? Would'st pay
"With dower like this yon rescued Maiden's life?
"Bethink thee! If thou losest her—not he

"Not Perseus took her from thee, but the Powers
"Offended of the Nereïd Deities,
"Great Ammon's self, and that huge Ocean-beast
"Wallowing, that threatened in my child to tear
"My house's very vitals! In the hour
"That saw her led to Death, thy bride to thee
"Was lost. Barbarian! would'st thou rather see
"Her perish, and, in that calamity
"Of all, thy loss feel less?—Was't not enough
"There bound before thine eyes thy Niece, thy Bride,
"To see, nor strike one helping blow?—Dost dare
"Complain another saved her? Wilt thou grudge
"The prize to him who earned it? If so dear
"To thee it was, from yonder rock thyself
"Had'st better done to seek it! Peace! Let him
"Who won it wear. The hand whose valour saved
"A house else desolate, deserves and claims
"Its guerdon pledged:—a rival, if thou wilt,—
"But one to Death preferred, and not to Thee!"
No answering word he spoke, but furious glared
On Cepheus now, now Perseus, as in doubt
Which first to strike:—then sudden at the youth
With all the force of jealous hate he hurled
The ill-directed spear, that in the throne
Quivered on which he sate. The weapon quick
Seized Perseus, and, upstarting, with that steel
Returned had pierced his foe; but back he sprang
Behind the altar in the Hall, and crouched
Safe for the moment:—wretch, who never help
Of altar so deserved! But not in vain
The javelin flew:—Deep through the brow it sped

Of Rhætus, and prone felled him, in the fall
Wrenched from the shattered bone. The festal board
His spouting blood bespattered. Instant woke
The general strife; and missiles thick as hail
From all his comrades flew. "Death!" was the cry
"To Cepheus and his Son-in-law!" The King,
Attesting first all Gods of Host and Guest,
All right, all faith, that of that wrong himself
Was guiltless, from the hall had fled. But down
From Heaven shot Pallas to her Brother's aid,
And, with her Ægis shielding, held unharmed,
And gave him heart. Foremost among his foes,
Of Indian blood, stood Athis, whom the Nymph
Limnate in her crystal caverns erst
To Ganges bore. Scarce sixteen years the boy
To man had ripened:—fair of form, and decked
In garb that made him fairer: fringed with gold
His Tyrian mantle flowed,—a golden chain
Circled his neck,—a fillet of like ore
His perfumed locks confined. Well-skilled he was
Distant to hurl the javelin,—better still
In Archer's craft. Him, as his stubborn bow
He strung, with brand that on the altar lay
Still smouldering, Perseus smote, and all his face
Smashed into formless ruin. Lycabas
The Assyrian, friend and comrade dearest loved
And loving, saw those features fair in gore
Grovel convulsed, and from that bitter wound
The life-blood gushing pour. And, with wild yell
Of grief and rage the bow the boy had strung
He stooped and snatched. "With me," he shouted, "now

"Be tried the contest! Think not long to boast
"This triumph o'er a slaughtered child—thy shame
"And not thy praise!"—and, with the word, the shaft
Loosed flashing from the string. The wary son
Of Danaë in his mantle's fold received
Its idle force; and, with that falchion famed
That shore Medusa's head, upon his foe
Fierce rushing, drave it to his heart. The night
Of Death closed black around him. But with eyes,
While yet they could, on Athis bent, beside
That corse beloved he strove to fall, and, so
Linked in like fate, less sorrowing sought the Shades!
One,—Phorbas, child of fair Methione
Syenian born,—and one, Amphimedon
Of Libyan lineage, forward to the strife
Too eager pressing, on the floor, with blood
Red-deluged, slipped and fell:—nor either rose
Again. Of this the neck, of that the flank
The fatal falchion smote. By other arms
Fell Erithus, of Athon's line. A bowl
Of massive silver, rough with carven forms
Inwrought, the Hero seized, and, with both hands
Uplifting, dashed him headlong. Vomiting
A crimson flood he rolled, and with his head
Convulsive beat the pavement. Stricken next
Fell Polydæmon, from Semiramis
Glorying his line to trace, and Abaris,
Caucasian, and Lycetus, of thy stream,
Spercheius, sprung:—and, fair with flowing locks,
Fell Elycus,—Phlegias and Clitus fell;
And, trampled still 'neath Perseus' foot, the heap

Of slaughter rose. Close contest with such foe
The soul of Phineus dared not: but from far
His spear he hurled, that, aimed amiss, its wound
On Idas dealt,—Idas, who in that strife
Unsharing, vainly neutral, stood. His wrath
Flashed from his eyes. "If choose I must"—he cried—
"My part,—then feel the foe thyself hast made,
"And pay my wound with thine!" and from his side
The steel he plucked, but, in the effort back
To hurl it, strength and blood forsook his limbs
Collapsed, and prone he fell. By this the sword
Of Clymenus Odites, of the Peers
Of Cepheus chief, had slain:—and for thy life
Protenor, Hypseus to Lyncides paid
His own. Amid that throng Æmathion stood,
Reverend in years:—his justice all men knew,
His piety all Gods:—and, though from age
His hand might wield no weapon, with his voice
Contending still, with trembling arms around
The altar clasped, loudly that impious strife
Denounced. But, on the very stone, the blade
Of Chromis lopped his head; and from his tongue
Still struggling, inarticulate, the curse
Amid the smouldering embers died away.
Broteas and Ammon next, twins unsurpassed
In boxer's art,—and both invincible
Could but the cæstus match the sword,—the hand
Of Phineus stretched in death;—and Amycus,
Around whose brow the snowy fillet wreathed
The Priest of Ceres spoke. Ill too with these
Confounded, Iapetides his fate

O'ertook. Ah! bidden ne'er to scene like this,
Revel and feast alone that lyre and lay,
Peace-breathing, should have cheered! Him, as he stood,
Plectrum and harp in hand, the death-blow smote
Of Pettalus. "Hence! and in Hades end
"Thy song!" he shouted, mocking, and his brow
Clove with his sword; and, as he fell, the strings,
Swept with his dying touch, a broken strain
And piteous breathed. Nor unavenged his fall
Lycormas saw,—but from its socket tore
The portal's dexter-bar. Deep in the brain
Buried of Pettalus it crashed, and, as
Before Jove's altar falls a bull, he fell!
The answering bar Cinyphian Pelatus
Had sprung to seize, but, in the act, his hand
The shaft of Corythus transpierced, and nailed
Fast to the wood;—and his defenceless side
The steel of Abas drained. The wood his fall
Tenacious barred,—and, as he hung, he died!
Then fell, for Perseus fighting, Menaleus,
And Dorylas, than whom no Lord of lands
Ruled wider by the banks of Nasamon,
Or with more plenteous harvest stored his barns.
Him sideways, with his spear-point, in the flank
Where fatal falls the blow, Halcyoneus
The Bactrian struck, and, as his foe he saw
Prostrate, with glazing eye and gasp convulsed,
In death-pang rolled, "For all thy lands," he cried,
"Thy body's length may serve thee now!" and turned
Contemptuous from the corse. But Perseus tore
The weapon from the wound, and, in mid face,

Through nose and skull and brain, avenging drove
The point, that glittering far behind out-stood.
Heaven nerved his arm that moment. Clytius next
And Clanis fell:—one mother gave them birth
To different fate ordained: through Clytius' thigh
The ashen spear, through Clavis' jaws the dart
With fatal force he hurled. And Celadon
Of Mendes died, and Astreus, Syrian-born
Of sire uncertain, and Æthion, wise
To read the fate of others, blindly led
To meet his own. Thoactes, to the King
Destined no more his arms to bear,—and, foul
With parricide, Agyrtes swelled the slain.
But for one dead a hundred live, and all
Bent on one life—sworn comrades in a cause
That mocks at Faith and Right. To these opposed
But Cepheus, vainly loyal,—and thy shrieks
Cassiope, and thine, young Bride, that rend
With wail the palace-halls, amid the clang
More loud of arms and death-groan of the slain,
Unheeded or unheard. The household Gods
Polluted drip with slaughter; but the strife
Bellona stirs anew. Round Danaë's son
Phineus and all his followers close; like hail
In winter fly the javelins;—right and left
Before his eyes, beside his ears, they whizz
And flash. Against a column's bulk his back
He sheltered, and, on that side safe, with front
Undaunted stemmed the onset. On the right
Chaonian Molpeus threatened,—on the left
Of Nabathæan blood Ethemon pressed.

And, as a tigress, wild with hunger, hears
Deep in the vale the low of pasturing herds
On either side, and doubtful this or that
First to attack, on both at once would rush,—
So fierce, yet hesitating, Perseus stood
Which first to strike. Molpeus the earlier blow
Provoked, and limping with half-severed leg
Slunk from the fray. Content the Hero marked
His flight, without pursuit;—for that no time
Ethemon gave:—but his ill-measured stroke,
Aimed where the neck and shoulder join, alone
The column's shaft endured. The shivered blade
In splinters from the marble flew, and, back
Recoiling, in the throat the striker struck,
Sore hurt, but not to Death. That doom the hand
Of Perseus dealt; and, staggering as he reeled,
Through the weak fence of his unweaponed arms
The falchion—erst the gift of Maia's son—
Deep in his bosom buried. But that strife,
He knew, no valour with outnumbering force
Might more sustain. "Yourselves will have it so!"
He cried—"Then meet your fate! What was my foe
"Must friend me now. Comrades!—if comrades yet
"I have—turn hence your eyes!"—And from its shroud
The Gorgon-Head he drew. "Hence! Mountebank!"
Cried Thescalus—"On fools and children try
"These juggling tricks!" And, as his lance he poised,
In act to whirl, the man a statue stood!
Ampyx beside him fought, and at thy breast
Lyncides, bold as loyal, would have struck:
But, in the very stroke, his stiffening hand

Nor back nor forward more had power to move!
Nileus,—who from old Egypt's seven-fold flood
Claimed lying origin, and on his shield,
In silver part in-wrought and part in gold,
Seven rivers bore,—came next. "Behold"—he cried
"The badge that speaks my parentage!—and bear
"To Hades all such solace as thy Death
"From hand like mine may yield!" The later words
Were choked in utterance; and the marble lips,
Open to speak, to no more speech gave way.
"Dastards!" shouts Eryx—"'tis your cowardice
"And not the Gorgon numbs ye! On with me,
"And strike this juggler down!" And, as he rushed,
In Earth his foot was fixed, and, threatening still,
But motionless, the Warrior glared in stone.
So these their doom earned justly. Fate less due
Aconteus met. Him, as on Perseus' side
Forward too far he pressed, that Face accurst
Encountering petrified. Astyages
Smote, as he thought, a living foe:—his sword
Clinked only on a stone. Like fate amazed
O'ertook him, and in marble still his eyes
With wonder seemed to stare. 'Twere long to tell
The roll of meaner names. Two hundred yet
The strife had spared:—two hundred into stone
The Gorgon struck. Too late that impious war
The soul of Phineus rued. But what of help
Remains?—His comrades round him stand—each friend
He sees, and knows, and calls,—and with vain grasp
Of hand essays to rouse:—but all his touch
Can reach are statues! With averted glance

He bowed, and sideways spread his suppliant arms:—
"I own thee victor, Perseus!—Turn, ah! turn
"That fearful Face away, whose power too well,
"Whate'er She be, is proved! In mercy take
"The monster hence! No hate to thee it was,
"No lust of sway, that moved me:—for my Bride
"Alone I drew the sword. For service done
"The stronger claim is thine:—but mine at least
"In date was earlier. Better had I known
"Earlier to yield it!—Conqueror,—'tis for life
"Alone I ask thee! Be all else thine own!"
So prayed he, daring not his eyes to raise
To him he sued. "I grant thee what I can,
"Craven!" the Hero answered—"boon enough
"For such as thou! My falchion harms thee not!
"That fear at least dismiss. Here not the less
"A monument to all succeeding times
"Fixed shalt thou stand: and in her Father's halls
"My wife shall look upon the spouse she lost,
"And smile, to think she lost him!" And he flashed
Full on the cowering wretch the Gorgon-Head.
Vainly he strove to shun it! Into stone
The writhing neck was stiffened:—white the eyes
Froze in their sockets:—and the statue still,
With hands beseeching spread, and guilty fear
Writ in its face, for mercy seemed to pray.

II. To Argos thence the Victor bore his bride,
His natal soil: burning his Mother's wrong
On Prœtus to avenge:—Prœtus, whose hand
Unbrotherlike Acrisius from his throne

Had hurled, and o'er his realm usurping ruled.
But here no strength of weapon or of wall
Availed him:—From the towers his treason won
Appalled he fled,—nor faced with mortal arms
The snaky horror of that monstrous Head.

III. Nor yet the tyrant of that petty isle,
Seriphus, all the Hero's trophies, won
In many a toil and contest perilous,
Had wrought to own his worth, or softened aught
The enduring hate he nursed. No generous word
Of praise from Polydectes came:—for him,
The Gorgon's fate was but a braggart's lie.
"Learn then its truth!" the son of Danaë cried,—
"Look hence, who love me!"—and upon the King
Medusa glared,—and straight the King was stone!

IV. Thus far her brother, golden-born, the aid
Of Pallas led. But from Seriphus now
Veiled in a cloud she soared. To right she left
Cythnos and Gyaros, and, where her way
Lay shortest o'er the Ocean-waves, to Thebes
And muse-loved Helicon she flew, and there
Descending, to the Sisters Nine—"What tale"
She said—"is this I hear, of some new fount
"Sprung from the hoof-dint of that steed, whose birth
"I witnessed, when his Gorgon-Mother bled?—
"Show me the spot! To see it am I here!"
To her Urania—"Goddess! whatsoe'er
"The cause that brings thee, Welcome! Never guest
"To us comes dearer! For the tale—'tis true!

" To Pegasus the fountain owes its birth:—
" Behold it here!"—And to the sacred spring
She led Minerva. Long with musing gaze
And wondering on the fount the Goddess looked,
And on the ancient woods that girt it round,
The caverns cool, the turf with every hue
Of flowers unnumbered glowing. " Happy ye!"
She murmured—" Daughters of Mnemosyne,
" In haunt and life like this!"—" O Goddess great!"
One answered—" whom,—but for that prouder place
" Where birth and valour seat thee, sure our band
" Had for a sister numbered,—what thou say'st
" Is just and true:—sweet is our haunt, and sweet
" Our labours, and, secure from fear, our life
" Were blest indeed! But violence and wrong
" Are rife around us:—daily terrors fill,
" Maids as we are, our bosoms. Yet before
" These eyes Pyreneus seems to stand, and yet
" I tremble at the memory. Daulis he
" And Phocis with his Thracian soldiery
" Had seized and held usurped. Us, as it chanced,
" To Delphos journeying, and by sudden storm
" O'ertaken and unsheltered, with fair show
" Of reverence he accosted—false as fair—
" ' Hail! Daughters of Mnemosyne'—(our names
" The traitor knew)—' Deign underneath my roof
" ' Awhile the tempest's wrath to shun. The Gods
" ' Themselves ere now have meaner refuge used.'
" Fair seemed the proffer;—pitiless the storm
" Was pelting;—and we entered. When the sky
" Again was clear, and Aquilo had driven

" Dun-clouded Auster back, upon our way
" We would have fared. The gates were barred; and Force
" Had shamed us,—but we shook out sudden wings
" Bird-like, and fled. Upon his topmost tower
" Furious the traitor stood—and ' Where ye pass
" ' I too can follow!' shouting—madly leaped
" In air, and fell, and lay, a shattered mass
" Of bones and blood that crimsoned all the soil."

V. The Muse was speaking yet, when whirr of wings
Came rustling overhead, and from the boughs
Voices that bade them ' Hail!'—so human-clear
That upward Pallas turned her wondering gaze
To see who spoke. She saw but Birds:—a row
Thrice three, of Pies, at imitative sounds
Deftest of wingèd things, that, on a branch
Perched clamorous, seemed as though some woful fate
They wailed and strove to tell. To her the Muse:—
" The Birds thou seest of all the tribes of air
" Are newest. Pierus, their Sire, was Lord
" Of Pella's field, and, of Pæonian strain
" Evippe was their mother. Thrice three times
" Conceiving, thrice three times Lucina's aid
" She prayed and won. Their mystic number swelled
" The foolish girls with pride. All Thessaly
" They traversed, all Achaia's towns, and here
" At last, with open taunt and challenge bold,
" Stood, and defied us. ' Cease'—they cried—' the strains
" ' Whose vapid sweetness all too long hath gulled
" ' The vulgar of its praises! Sing with us
" ' Thespiades! if in your Goddess-souls

" ' Be courage for such contest. Nor in voice
" ' Nor art we fear comparison. We too
" ' Are Nine, as ye are. If we win, to us
" ' Medusa's fount and Aganippe's spring
" ' Resign. If ye be victors,—from the fields
" ' Of Thessaly to our Pæonian snows
" ' Conquered we back betake us. Let the Nymphs
" ' Between us judge!'—'Twas shameful to contend,
" But shameful more to yield. The chosen Nymphs
" By all their River-Gods to sentence fair
" Were sworn:—the rock with living verdure fresh
" Their judgment-seat supplied. No lot had ruled
" The contest's order, but impetuous forth
" One sprang, who claimed their Champion's place—and sang
" The Wars of Heaven. But all her partial praise
" Was for the Giants:—valour of the Gods
" Was none, or sore disparaged. Thee she sang,
" Typhoëus, of the throes of central Earth
" Tremendous born, and how thy onset smote
" The Lords of Heaven with terror, and in flight
" Drave panic-stricken, till Egyptian Nile
" Sheltering amid his seven-fold channels hid
" The panting Fugitives:—and how, even there,
" That Earth-born Foe's pursuit to meaner shapes
" Transformed they shunned. Great Jupiter—she told—
" Was hidden in a Ram—so first were wreathed
" The horns of Libic Ammon:—Raven's plumes
" Apollo clad:—the son of Semele
" Lurked in a Goat:—Diana in a Cat:—
" A milk-white Cow was Juno:—Mercury
" An Ibis soared:—and Venus swam, a Fish.

" So—with light touch accordant of the lyre,
" She sang :—'Twas ours to answer.—But thy hours
" Are precious, Goddess,—nor thy leisure serves
" To list our strain repeated." " Think it not!"
The Goddess answered—" On this shady bank
" My seat shall be to hear it :—tell it out
" From end to end!"—" On one "—the Muse resumed—
" Alone of all our band fearless we staked
" The issue of the contest, and uprose
" Calliope,—her locks, else floating loose,
" With ivy garlanded,—and with light touch
" Of prelude smote the quivering strings, and clear
" With harmony of voice and lyre she sang.

VI. " Ceres it was, who first with crookèd share
" Furrowed the glebe ;—who first the golden boon
" Of harvest and all kindly fruit of Earth
" Bestowed, and taught men Law. To her whate'er
" We are, or have, we owe. To her my strain
" I dedicate,—theme worthiest of all song :—
" Ah! would the song were worthier of its theme!
" Piled o'er a buried Giant stands the Isle
" Of Trinacris. Beneath the mighty mass
" Typhoëus lies, yet breathing—he who thought
" To storm the heights of Heaven—and still he writhes
" And struggles with his burden. But thy weight,
" Pelorus, binds his better hand ;—the left
" Pachynus crushes ;—Lilybæum cramps
" His legs and feet ; and, o'er his head, the load
" Of loftiest Ætna presses. Thence, supine
" Outspread, a flood of ashes blent and fire

" He belches forth, in effort vain to heave
" The pressure from his labouring breast, and roll
" The uprooted mount in ruin o'er its towns.
" So quakes the Earth:—and, in his silent realm
" The Lord of Hades trembles, lest she gape
" Outright, and sudden day-flood through her wound
" Pour on the startled Shades. Such terror 'twas
" That whilome from his darksome seat to Earth
" Evoked him. Round each shore of Sicily
" The sable steeds were driven, and keen and close
" He scanned the Isle. Firm-based it stood, and fast,
" And gave no sign of yielding:—and his soul
" Was reassured. But, from the mount that gave
" Her name, the eye of Erycina marked
" The truant God; and round her wingèd child
" Her fondling arms she flung. 'O Thou'—she cried—
" 'My son! my hand! my weapon ever-true!
" 'My power's best champion! haste, my Cupid! seize
" 'Those arms that conquer all, and with thy shaft
" 'Pierce me yon God, who in the triple realm
" 'Sways nethermost! What! shall the Lords of Heaven
" 'And Jove their Sovereign—shall the Powers of Sea
" 'And He who rules them—own thy might, and Hell
" 'Alone be free?—The third o' the World's at stake!
" 'Strike but this blow, and win it! Seest thou not
" 'How even in Heaven my tottering Empire shakes,
" 'And, with it, thine? Minerva mocks my power!
" 'The frigid huntress, Dian, scoffs at me!
" 'Yon girl of Ceres apes them; and a Maid
" 'Will die, if we not hinder. If one throb
" 'Of gratitude for Empire equal shared

" 'Be thine, unite this pair!'—So Venus urged
" Her offspring, not unwilling:—and he oped
" His quiver's store, and from its thousand shafts
" One, at her hest, selected:—sharper none
" Or surer ever from the bow-string twanged
" Obedient;—and against his knee he set
" The horn, and bent it,—and the barbèd dart
" Shot sudden to the very heart of Dis.
" There stands a broad lake near to Enna's walls,—
" Men call it Pergus:—Not Caÿster's wave
" More musical with song of frequent swans.
" The veiling woods o'erhang its face, and ward
" The fires of baffled Phœbus. From the grove
" Breathes coolness:—from the turf a thousand flowers
" Blush with the hues of Tyre. Perpetual Spring
" The spot invests. Beneath the happy shade
" Proserpina was sporting:—now she culled
" The violet's purple, now the lily's snow,
" And still her basket heaped, and girl-like filled
" Her bosom with the fragrant spoil, and mocked
" Her mates who gathered less. Ah! Love is swift!—
" To see,—to burn,—to bear her thence,—for Dis
" Was but a moment's work. The frighted Maid
" Shrieking, upon her Mother and her mates
" For succour called,—her Mother most. Her robe
" Was rent, and on the Earth her treasured flowers
" Were scattered, and her child-like innocence
" Even for that loss, even in that hour, was fain
" To grieve. But onward swift the Ravisher
" His chariot urged, and, each by name invoked,
" Pressed to their speed his sable steeds, and flung

" Loose on their necks the reins, with rust and grime
" Infernal stained. Past the deep lake he sped,
" And by the sulphurous pools, where yawning Earth
" Upheaved the twins Palician, to the spot
" Where erst the Bacchiad Exile built his walls
" 'Twixt two unequal havens,—minded so
" Of his own Corinth and its double Sea.
" Betwixt the fount of Pisan Arethuse
" And Cyane, a Sea there lies;—a lake
" It seems, so close the circling shores contract
" Its entrance. There, of all Sicilian Nymphs
" In honour chief, dwelt Cyane:—her name
" The waters bore. Mid-high above the flood
" She rose, and recognised the God. 'Forbear!'
" She cried—'I bar thy farther way! Not thus,
" 'Against the will of Ceres, hope to be
" 'Her Son-in-law! Who seeks that hand, should sue,
" 'Not ravish! Ill with thee may such as I
" 'Compare;—but once I too was loved, and when
" 'Of old Anapis sought me for his bride,
" 'By prayer and gentle suit his Wife was won,
" 'And not by terror, like this frightened child!'
" She spake, and wide her arms outspread, and stood
" Opposing:—but the wrath of Saturn's Son
" Burned hot within him:—and a mighty shout
" Called on those terrible steeds. With stalwart arm
" His sceptre in the fronting gulf he whirled,
" And buried in its depths; and Sea and Earth,
" In chasm tremendous yawning, gave him way,
" And headlong down to Hades swept the Car.
" But ah! the grief of Cyane,—to see

"A Goddess ravished, and her honoured fount
"With insult shamed! No plaint she made, but mute
"That wrong mourned inconsolable; and drowned
"In tears she wasted, in the flood absorbed
"Whereof she once was Goddess. Form and limb
"Their outline lost; and bone and nail—whate'er
"Was firm—grew flexible: whate'er more soft
"Of texture, locks, and fingers, legs, and feet,
"With easier change dissolved:—and back and breast
"And shoulders, trickling down in slender rills,
"Blent with the stream:—till in her veins the blood
"Paled into water, and, impalpable
"All corporal substance in the flood was lost.

VII. "But over Land and Sea disconsolate
"The Mother sought her Child. Still, in that task,
"Aurora found her, when her ruddy locks
"At earliest morn she shook;—still Hesperus
"At Eve beheld her. Through the midnight frosts,
"Sleepless, in either hand a piny torch,
"Kindled in Ætna's flames, she waved:—and, when
"The Stars were lost in dawn, where Phœbus rose
"Or set, East, West, the endless search pursued.
"Weary and travel-worn,—her lips unwet
"With water,—at a straw-thatched cottage door
"The Wanderer knocked. An ancient crone came forth
"And saw her need, and hospitable brought
"Her bowl of barley-broth, and bade her drink.
"Thankful she raised it:—but a graceless boy
"And impudent stood by, and, ere the half
"Was drained, 'Ha! ha! see how the glutton swills!'

" With insolent jeer he cried. The Goddess' ire
" Was roused, and, as he spoke, what liquor yet
" The bowl retained full in his face she dashed.
" His cheeks broke out in blotches:—What were arms
" Turned legs, and from the shortened trunk a tail
" Tapered behind. Small mischief evermore
" Might that small body work:—the lizard's self
" Was larger now than he. With terror shrieked
" The crone, and weeping stooped her altered child
" To raise;—the little monster fled her grasp
" And wriggled into hiding. Still his name
" His nature tells, and, from the star-like spots
" That mark him, known as Stellio crawls the Newt.

VIII. " What Seas, what Lands, in that enduring quest
" The Goddess traversed, were a tedious tale
" To tell. No spot of Earth unvisited
" Escaped her. Baffled, back to Sicily
" At last she came. There, wandering up and down,
" By Cyane she passed,—and Cyane,
" But for that change had told her all: but tongue
" And voice—all organ of articulate speech—
" Were lost. Yet on her surface, manifest,
" What sign she could she gave. Floating, the zone,
" That in that hallowed fount Persephone
" Had dropped, the Mother saw, and knew, and tore
" Her locks dishevelled, and with passionate hands
" Her bosom beat. Her child was lost!—The theft
" Was clear,—but who the Robber? That as yet
" She knew not:—but all Earth's expanse she banned,—
" Ungrateful and unworthy of her gifts,—

" To barrenness:—Trinacria most, which first
" Assured her of her loss. With angry hand
" The ploughs she broke:—the peasant and his team
" Sickened alike and died: the laboured fields
" Their promise broke:—and all the kindly seeds
" Were blasted with strange poison. Through the world
" Earth's fruitfulness was marred. The tender blade
" In its first greenness withered. Drought or Flood
" Alternate parched or rotted. Stars and Winds
" Alike were adverse. All the greedy fowl
" Of Heaven, devouring, wheresoe'er the grain
" Was scattered, flocked:—and all pernicious growth
" Of darnel, and of cockle, choked the corn,
" And pest of ineradicable quitch.
" Then from her Elid fount arose the bride
" Of Alpheus:—backward o'er her shoulders fair
" She tossed her streaming locks and spoke. 'O Thou,
" ' Mother of that lost Maid through all the World
" ' So sought,—Great Parent of all kindly grain
" ' That Terra yields,—thy mighty toil give o'er,—
" ' Nor with thy wrath unmerited the Earth,
" ' That loves thee, visit! Guiltless of all wrong
" ' Is Earth:—unwilling through her breast she gave
" ' The Spoiler way. Not for my native land
" ' I ask thy pity—far away it lies
" ' By Pisa; and, in Elis born, I dwell
" ' In Sicily, a stranger. But no soil
" ' Like this I love, and Arethusa's home
" ' And household-Gods are here. Thy mercy here,
" ' Sweet Goddess, grant! To tell why thence I came,
" ' And through what breadths of Ocean-waves my streams

" ' Ortygia reached, a fitter time may come
" ' When all thy cares are quieted, and smiles
" ' That gracious face revisit. All the depths
" ' Of Earth I traverse:—where her caverns lie
" ' Darkest and nethermost I pass, and here
" ' Uprising, look once more upon the Stars.
" ' And in my course I saw her! Yea, these eyes,
" ' As past the Stygian realm my waters rolled,
" ' Proserpina beheld! Still sad she seemed,
" ' And still her cheek some trace of terror wore,
" ' But all a Queen, and, in that dismal world,
" ' Greatest in place and majesty,—the wife
" ' Of that tremendous God who rules in Hell!'
" Astounded, fixed as stone, the Mother heard
" The tale; and long in wondering trance she stood;
" But grief had way, and roused her. Swift to Heaven
" She sped her car:—and, with dishevelled locks,
" Her face with gloom o'ercast, before Jove's throne
" With earnest suit for justice told her wrong.
" ' For mine own blood,—for thine too, Jupiter,—
" ' Behold me suppliant! If the Mother now
" ' Plead idly, let the child her Father move!
" ' Oh! right her not the less that I it was
" ' Who gave her birth! At last so dearly sought
" ' I find my Daughter:—Find?—nay, rather lose!
" ' Ill may'st thou call it finding, but to know
" ' Her place of durance. For the violence done
" ' I pardon it, so He but give her back.
" ' No Robber-Husband Proserpine should wed,—
" ' Whose insult shames Jove's Daughter,—if not mine!'
" Calmly Jove interposed:—' To thee and me

" ' The Maid alike is precious. Give we things
" ' Their proper names. 'Twas Love, not brutal force,
" ' That to this deed impelled. Such Son-in-law
" ' So thou but own him, Goddess, is no shame.
" ' Were there naught else, is Jove's own Brother-born
" ' For nothing counted? What, if next my own
" ' Fate gives him widest Empire? Wilt thou urge
" ' Thy quarrel still?—Then be it so! Thy child
" ' On one condition only back to Day
" ' Returns—if in that nether Realm no food
" ' Her lips have passed. So have the Fates decreed!'
" He said:—and Ceres deemed her child restored.
" The Fates had willed it otherwise. Her fast
" The Bride had broken. Thoughtless, as she roved
" Amid the gardens of the Shades, her hand
" One ripe pomegranate from its branch had plucked,
" And of its grains thrice two and one had felt
" The pressure of her teeth. Ascalaphus
" Alone had seen it, whom to Acheron
" Orphne, most famous of Avernian Nymphs,
" Erewhile had in her darkling caverns borne.
" He saw:—and cruel what he saw he told:
" And all return was barred. For ever Queen
" Of Erebus was Proserpine. One moan
" Of grief she gave,—and to a bird transformed
" The Spy. With water snatched from Phlegethon
" His brow she sprinkled. Instant, beak and plumes
" And larger eyes were his, and tawny wings
" His altered form uplifted, and his head
" Swelled disproportioned to his size: his nails
" Curved crookèd into claws,—and heavily

" His pinions beat the air. A bird accursed,
" Augur of coming sorrow, still to Man
" Ill-ominous and hateful flits the Owl.

IX. " So, haply not unmerited, his fate
" The Tell-tale met. But ye—what had ye done
" Daughters of Acheloüs, that with plume
" And claw, and bird-like, save the virgin-face
" That yet ye keep, ye soar? Were ye too there
" Sporting amid the mates of Proserpine,
" Ye Sirens, when those vernal flowers she culled?
" Did ye too wander in that fruitless quest,
" And, when the Earth was traversed, ask for wings
" To search the breadth of Ocean?—Ah! the Gods
" Heard ye too well,—and sudden o'er your limbs
" Transformed that cloak of golden plumage flung!
" But for the dulcet strain, the gift of Song,
" That ravish mortal ears, They spared ye these,—
" And Maiden-face and human voice remained.

X. " But now impartial Jove had reconciled
" His Brother and his Sister. 'Twixt the twain
" Equal he shared the rolling year: and so
" In either world the Queen of Erebus
" Had common honour:—half her months on Earth
" Her Mother claimed; her Husband half in Hell.
" And Ceres was herself again:—alike
" Body and Soul were lightened, and her face,
" Gloomy but now as that of Dis himself,
" Smiled once again. So smiles the God of Day
" When through the watery clouds that veil his orb

" He bursts, and beams victorious on the World.
" And, for her Child discovered now at ease,
" To Arethuse she turned. 'Now tell'—she said—
" 'What hither led thy wandering course, and how
" 'Thy place amid the sacred founts was won.'
" The waves were smoothed—and from their depths the Nymph,
" Her head uplifting, sleeked her emerald locks,
" And of Alpheus' wooing told the tale.
" 'Achaia was my birthplace. Of her Nymphs
" 'More eager none in chase her forests tracked,
" 'None defter spread the toils. Active and strong
" 'For beauty's fame I sought not:—not the less
" 'Men called me beautiful. But in my soul
" 'I loathed the praise that charms all women else:
" 'And, when they told me that my face was fair,
" 'Blushed for my face, and deemed it crime to please.
" 'Upon a day—ah! well that day I mind!—
" 'It chanced, that wearied from Stymphalus' grove
" 'I wended:—sultry glowed the Noon, and toil
" 'Had doubled all its fervours. To a stream
" 'I came. Without a ripple or a sound
" 'So smooth its waters glided, scarce they seemed
" 'To move at all; and clear beneath the flood
" 'Its pebbles might be counted:—o'er its banks
" 'Shelving the pale-leafed willow flung its shade,
" 'And the wave-nurtured poplar. I approached,
" 'And first my foot I dipped, and then my knee,
" 'Then, tempted by the coolness, loosed my zone
" 'And on a willow-branch my mantle hung
" 'And plunged beneath the wave; and dived, and swam,

" ' And with all sportive stroke of oary arms
" ' Cleft at my will the flood:—when from its depths
" ' Strange murmur swelled, and terrified I sought
" ' The bank that nearest lay. Behind me, hoarse,
" ' The River-God, for He it was, arose:—
" ' Stay Arethusa! Arethusa stay!
" ' Whither would'st fly?' Upon the farther bank
" ' My vest was hung; and, naked as I was,
" ' I fled,—he followed. So disrobed I seemed
" ' An easier prize. As when the trembling Dove
" ' Flies the pursuing Hawk,—as when the Hawk
" ' Pursues the trembling Dove,—so sped we both,
" ' I chased, he chasing. Past Orchomenos,
" ' Past Psophis and Cyllene, past the glades
" ' Of Mænalus, athwart the breezy steep
" ' Of Erymanthus, over Elis' bounds
" ' I held my flight:—for I was swift as he,
" ' But stronger he than I, and better-breathed
" ' For lengthened course; and weariless his force
" ' Outmatched my weaker powers. But still, by plain
" ' And shaded knoll, by crag and rock, where way
" ' Was rough or none, I fled. The Sun sloped low
" ' Behind us, and before my feet his form,
" ' Gaining, a lengthening shadow threw,—or so
" ' At least my terror fancied. Nearer yet
" ' His foot-fall echoed, and his panting breath
" ' Played on my streaming locks. Weary, and faint,
" ' I could no more. "Help me, or I am lost!"
" ' I gasped—"Dictynna! help thine own true maid!
" ' "If ever faithfully this hand hath borne
" ' "Thy bow, thy quiver, help!" The Goddess heard

" 'My cry, and o'er me—from the rack disjoined—
" 'A fleecy cloud she threw. The baffled God
" 'Groped blindly round and round. The airy veil
" 'Concealed me from his eager search; and twice
" 'Around the spot which hid me, hot in quest,
" 'But seeing naught, he circled; twice his voice
" 'Shouted "Ho! Arethusa!" Judge what fear
" 'Was mine! The Lamb that, howling round the fold,
" 'The hungry Wolf hath startled, or the Hare
" 'That quaking in her form the closing pack
" 'Around her sees, and dares nor stay nor stir,
" 'May match it. Still he lingers, for no trace
" 'Of foot-print sees he farther. Round the spot
" 'And round the cloud he hunts. From all my limbs
" 'Oozed the cold sweat of terror: from my form
" 'The drops fell fast: round either foot a pool
" 'Gathered; and from my tresses rained the dew:—
" 'And, quicker than I tell the tale, dissolved
" 'I melted to a Fountain!—Then he knew
" 'The waters that he loved, and flung aside
" 'His human shape assumed, and would have blent
" 'With mine his mingled flood. But Delia struck
" 'The Earth, and through its darksome caverns deep
" 'I sank, and rolled, till in Ortygia here,
" 'Proud of the Goddess' name it bears, I rose,
" 'And looked once more upon the light of Heaven.'

XI. "So ran the tale of Arethuse.—And now
" The Goddess to her car the Dragons twain
" Had yoked and bridled, and aloft through air
" Midway 'twixt Earth and Sky to Athens held

" Her course, and, grateful, to Triptolemus
" The chariot lent; and taught him with what seed
" The virgin-soil to fertilise, and how
" To bid the rested fallows teem once more.
" Through Europe and through Asia in that car
" Sublime the youth was borne. To Scythia last
" He came, where Lyncus reigned, and at his gates
" Sought hospitable shelter. Whence he came,
" And how, and why, and what his name and race
" First asked the King. 'My natal soil'—he said—
" 'Is Athens,—noblest City; and my name
" 'Triptolemus. And, nor with sail on sea,
" 'Nor foot on shore, I travel! Through the air
" 'Heaven yields me pathway. To the world I bear
" 'The gifts of gracious Ceres:—scatter them
" 'Through all thy spacious fields, and reap the boon
" 'Of harvest and all kindly food of man!'
" Envious the Savage heard, and, covetous
" Himself the glory of such goodly gifts
" To win, his guest in friendly guise received,
" And on his wearied rest perfidious stole,
" And with false blade had stabbed him as he lay,
" But Ceres stayed his lifted arm, and changed
" The traitor to a Lynx;—and roused the youth
" And bade him yoke the Car, and urge once more
" The sacred Dragons on their airy way.

XII. " So closed her lay the greatest of our band;—
" And all the umpire Nymphs accordant judged
" The victory ours. But into outcry loud
" The conquered Sisters broke, and at the doom

"And at the Judges railed. Calliope
"Spake stern:—'It not suffices then'—she said—
"'To stir this contest,—to deserve such doom
"'As such a challenge claimed;—ye needs must crown
"'Your fault with curses! If ye will not brook
"'Our patience, suffer then our punishment!
"'We give our wrath its way!' Scoffing the threat
"The Æmathians heard:—but, as they strove to speak,
"And clamorous rose with angry hands, and show
"Unseemly made of strife,—their nails were curved
"In claws,—their lifted arms with plumes were clad,—
"And each her Sister's face with rigid beak
"Saw sharpened. Fluttering to the woods they rose,
"New people of the air,—and wretched beat
"In sign of grief the wings which late were arms,—
"The Grove's disgrace,—a flock of chattering Pies,—
"And still incontinent of tongue, and hoarse
"And dissonant with everlasting screech."

THE

METAMORPHOSES

OF

PUBLIUS OVIDIUS NASO

BOOK VI.

THE METAMORPHOSES.

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I. So listened Pallas to the Aonian Maids,
And praised their song, and owned their vengeance just:
Then, to herself,—"Praise be where praise is due,—
"My own remains to claim;—nor unavenged
"A Goddess may be challenged!"—and she turned
Her thought to that Mæonian Maid, whose doom
The Fates ordained, Arachne,—she whose skill
In all the labours of the loom was deemed
To match her own. Of lowly birth, no line
Of famous ancestry was hers;—her art
Was all her fame. Of Colophon her Sire,
Idmon, of all his craft-mates deftest knew
With purple of Phocæa how to tinge
The wool he dyed. Her Mother long ago
Was dead,—in birth and blood her husband's mate.
But, spite of humble strain, through all the towns
Of Lydia had her labours won renown,
And lone Hypæpe, where she dwelt, her fame
Made famous. To admire her work the Nymphs

The vines of Tmolus left, and from thy waves
Pactolus, flocked the Naiads. Nor alone
The finished work allured them, but the toil
Itself was worth the seeing, such a grace
In all her labour charmed, or if she wound
In gathered ball the wool, or with quick hand
The needle plied, or with the comb the fleece
To cloud-like softness wrought, or dexterous twirled
The spindle. Pallas' self, they swore, her art
Had taught her. But the Maid that pupilage
Indignant disavowed, and scorned to own
Such teacher:—"Let her come"—she cried—"and try
"With me her skill,—and, if she conquer, mine
"Be then what doom she will!" And Pallas came,
Veiled in the semblance of an ancient crone,
White-haired, and on a staff her tottering steps
Sustaining;—and thus spoke:—"Not useless all
"Doth hoary age o'ertake us; with long life
"Experience comes. I counsel thee, my rede
"Thou spurn not. Over mortals be thy fame
"For skill, unquestioned, first:—but challenge not
"A Goddess! and, with better thought, for boast
"Too high ask pardon:—ask, and she forgives!"
Furious upon her looked the Maid, her task
So broken,—and almost her hand, irate,
She raised, and all her cheek with wrath was flushed,
And fiercely to the Goddess so disguised
She answered—"Hence! old dotard! Sure with years
"Thy blood is cold, thy sense outworn! long life
"Hath left thee but a fool! Go! moralise
"Thy daughters, if thou hast them,—to the wives

"Preach of thy sons! To me my proper sense
"Is counsellor sufficient. For thy rede,
"I mock it! and the praise I claimed, I claim!
"Why comes she not herself? Why doth she shun
"The contest?"—"She is here!" the Goddess said,
And flung aside the mask of withered eld,
And stood confessed. Reverent the Nymphs, the Maids
Mygdonian bowed before her. But alone
Unawed Arachne stood. Though o'er her cheek
With flush, soon fading, coursed the blood,—as Day
Glows purple when Aurora wakes, and pales
In the white heat of noon,—and obstinate
She held her purpose, madly covetous
That palm to win, and rushed upon her doom.
For now no longer shunned the child of Jove
The contest, or more warning gave: and each
Her station took. The looms were set,—the webs
Were hung: beneath their fingers nimbly plied
The subtle fabrics grew, and warp and woof,
Transverse, with shuttle and with slay compact
Were pressed in order fair. And either girt
Her mantle close, and eager wrought; the toil
Itself was pleasure to the skilful hands
That knew so well their task. With Tyrian hue
Of purple blushed the texture, and all shades
Of colour, blending imperceptibly
Each into each. So, when the wondrous bow—
What time some passing shower hath dashed the sun—
Spans with its mighty arch the vault of Heaven,
A thousand colours deck it, different all,
Yet all so subtly interfused, that each

Seems one with that which joins it, and the eye
But by the contrast of the extremes perceives
The intermediate change.—And last, with thread
Of gold embroidery pictured, on the web
Life-like expressed, some antique fable glowed.

II. Pallas in her Cecropian citadel
The Hill of Mars designed, and that dispute
Held in old time for right to name the town.
Twice six the Gods sate reverend on their thrones,
Jove in the midst, with all his majesty
Presented, and the others recognised
Each in his portraiture. There stood the God
Of Seas, and with his trident seemed to smite
The rugged rock, and from the cleft out-sprang
The Steed that for its author claimed the town.
Herself, with shield and spear of keenest barb
And helm, she painted;—on her bosom gleamed
The Ægis:—with her lance's point she struck
The earth, and from its breast the Olive bloomed,
Pale, with its berried fruit:—and all the Gods
Admiring gazed, adjudging in that strife
The victory hers. Then, that her rival well
Might read what doom her frenzied pride provoked,
In the four angles of the web, she drew
Four contests, in proportion less, but each
With life-like hues depicted. Rhodope
Was first, and Hæmus—wind-swept mountains now—
But mortals erst, who with o'erweening pride
Assumed the style of Gods. And next, the fate
Of that Pygmæan Queen, who with the spouse

Of Jove had vied, and, to a Crane transformed,
Waged on the tribes she ruled eternal war.
Antigone was third :—she too had dared
To rival Juno, and in bird-like shape
That impious daring rued ;—nor all her birth
In Ilion, nor Laomedon her sire
To save her aught availed :—a Stork she flew,
And still with snowy plume and clattering beak
Self-pleased claims notice. Fourth was Cinyras
The Assyrian ;—on a temple's steps he lay
Weeping, and with vain kisses seemed to press
The stones, erewhile his daughters, so for pride
To marble changed. And with her proper tree
She crowned the work, and woven round its marge
A wreath of peaceful olive twined its leaves.
Europa by that seeming Bull beguiled
Arachne drew ; the Bull had life,—the waves
Had motion :—backward seemed her glance to seek
The shore she left,—her lips to call her mates
To aid her,—and her delicate feet to shrink
From the first contact of the deepening Sea.
Asterie struggled in the Eagle's grasp :—
O'ershadowed by the Swan's enfolding wings
Lay Leda. In a Satyr's shape disguised
Jove filled with twins Antiope the child
Of Nycteus ;—in Amphitryon's likeness won
His spouse,—and in a golden rain the tower
Of Danaë entered ;—in a flame of fire
Played round Asopus' child,—in Shepherd guise
Mnemosyne deceived,—in Serpent's form
Deoïs. And Thee too, great Neptune, Lord

Of Ocean, for Æolian Arne's sake
A Steer, she pictured,—for Aloeüs' spouse
A River-God,—and for Bisaltus' child
Theophane, a Ram. In stallion's form
The Parent of all harvests golden-haired
Thy passion proved:—ere yet her locks to snakes
Were changed, the mother of the wingèd steed
Knew thee, a Fowl;—and, in thy proper realm
Of waves, a Dolphin's form Melantho won.
All these with likeness fair, and circumstance
Of truth, she drew. Nor Phœbus there was lacked
In herdsman's shape disguised, or veiled with plumes
Of falcon, or in shaggy lion's hide
Concealed, or in a shepherd's rustic garb
With Lesbian Isse toying. Hidden there
In his own blushing grape great Liber won
Erigone;—and Saturn's self, a steed,
Filled the Mare-mother with her Centaur-son.
And round the border of the finished toil
In slender wreath ran flowers of every hue,
With green of flexile ivy intertwined.

III. Not Pallas, nay, not Envy's self, could fault
In all the work detect:—but such success
The angry Goddess brooked not. Fierce she tore
The web that dared the guilty loves of Gods
To paint, and with her shuttle (of thy box,
Cytorus, wrought—) upon her brows the Maid
Struck twelve times, in her wrath. The high-souled Maid
Such insult not endured, and round her neck
Indignant twined the suicidal noose,

And so had died. But, as she hung, some ruth
Stirred in Minerva's breast:—the pendent form
She raised, and "Live!" she said—"but hang thou still
"For ever, wretch! and through all future time
"Even to thy latest race bequeath thy doom!"
And, as she parted, sprinkled her with juice
Of aconite. With venom of that drug
Infected dropped her tresses,—nose and ear
Were lost;—her form to smallest bulk compressed
A head minutest crowned;—to slenderest legs
Jointed on either side her fingers changed:
Her body but a bag, whence still she draws
Her filmy threads, and, with her ancient art,
Weaves the fine meshes of her Spider's web.

IV. All Lydia trembled:—through the Phrygian towns
Wide flew the rumour of her fate, and filled
The world with shuddering comment. Niobe,
Ere yet herself was wedded, while she dwelt
A virgin, in Mæonian Sipylus,
The Maid had known:—but from Arachne's doom
Not learned with deference due the powers of Heaven
To own superior, or repress the pride
And licence of her tongue. More even than all
The art that famous made her spouse,—the claim,
Common to both of Heavenly birth and kin,—
The breadth of realm she ruled,—though these she prized,—
Her children's number and their beauty swelled
Her arrogant soul; and of all Mothers far
Had Niobe lived happiest, had herself
Not so herself esteemed. Tiresias' child,

Manto, of all her Father's foresight heir,
By heavenly impulse stirred, amid the streets
Of Thebes had stood prophetic:—"Come!" she cried,
"Ismenides! your incense and your prayers
"Make ready, and with laurel wreathe your locks,
"In honour of Latona and the twins
"Latona bore. By me the Goddess speaks!"
Obedient heard the Matrons, and their gates
With garlands crowned; and altars blazed, and prayers
With fume of incense mingled rose to Heaven.
But on the rite broke Niobe,—her train
Following, the noblest daughters of the land,—
Glorious in purple mantle rich with gold,
And fair, but for the scorn that in her eyes
Her beauty marred. O'er either shoulder back
She flung her flowing locks, and proud her glance
Looked round:—"What means this madness? Why to Gods
"Unseen, unknown, this worship? Wherefore smoke
"These altars to Latona, when to me
"No incense burns? What! know ye not, my Sire
"Was Tantalus, alone of mortal strain
"Allowed with Gods to feast?—a Pleïad she
"Who gave me birth! My Grandsire on one side
"Was Atlas, he whose shoulders strong sustain
"The weight of Heaven;—on th' other, Jove himself,
"My Sire-in-law to boot!—My sceptre sways
"All Phrygia. Cadmus' realm and palace own
"In me their Mistress! And the walls which rose
"Responsive to my husband's lyre, and all
"Who people them, to us, their Sovereigns, bow!

" Turn where I will my glance, unmeasured wealth
" Salutes it! To no Goddess in all grace
" Of form I yield. Seven sons and daughters seven
" Each with fair mate in wedlock joined, or soon
" To join, I count! Have I not claim enough,
" I ask ye, to your reverence? Who is she,
" This child Titanian of some giant Sire,
" Cæus, or whom I know not, that to me
" Preferred ye honour her? Whom erst, with pangs
" Of travail smitten, all creation spurned
" And gave no resting-place! Nor sky, nor land,
" Nor sea received her! Exile of the World
" She roamed, and only Delos' petty isle
" The wanderer of the Sea, in pity housed
" The wanderer of the Earth, and on her soil
" Unstable gave her refuge. Twins she bore:—
" Twins?—Why my line seven times outnumbers hers!
" And blest I am, and blest must ever be,—
" Who doubts it?—so in plenty of all wealth
" Secured, too rich for Fortune's self to hurt;
" Who, rob me as she will, must leave me yet
" More than she steals! My greatness is assured
" Beyond the touch of Fear! Suppose her spite
" Strike at my populous house,—suppose I lose
" Haply some child or children,—what she leaves
" Still far outnumbers this Latona's two!
" Two?—why 'tis next to barrenness! Away!
" Have done with these unmerited rites, and strip
" The laurel from your brows!" Trembling they heard,
And left the unfinished service, murmuring low,—
'Twas all they dared,—for pardon from the Power

Forbidden to their vows. But on the steep
Of Cynthus sate the Goddess, and, with wrath
Transported, to those Twins indignant spake,—
"Look on me, Children! I, who gave ye birth,
"And in that birth so gloried,—I, who yield
"In place to none save Juno,—doubt if yet
"Goddess I be, or no,—insulted, spoiled,—
"If ye not help,—of altar and of rite
"For ages honoured! Nay, nor this affront
"Is all! Yon child of Tantalus her wrong
"With scurrilous speech embitters, and o'er you
"For her own brood precedence claims, and dares—
"Deep may she rue the taunt!—myself to twit
"For but a barren stock!—incontinent
"Of tongue as erst her Father!"—and with more
Appeal for aid had ended, but "Enough!"
Phœbus and Phœbe cried—"Time runs too slow
"Till we avenge thee!" and with swift descent
Shrouded in threatening clouds to Thebes they sped.
Before the city's walls a spacious plain
Extended, trampled smooth with frequent hoof
Of managed steed and wheel of whirling car.
There of Amphion's sons the elder-born
Their coursers breathed. With purple housing shone
Their saddles, and their reins were stiff with gold.
Foremost Ismenus rode, of all the seven
His mother's earliest burden:—gallantly
His prancing steed he reined, and wheeled, and urged,
Or curbed,—when lo! with sudden cry he shrieked!
Deep in his bosom stood the fatal dart
Quivering, and from his grasp relaxed the reins

Fell loose, and o'er his charger's shoulder trailed.
The whizzing of that deadly shaft the ear
Of Sipylus had caught, and fast he turned
With loosened rein. As when the mariner
Soon as the cloud he spies, of coming squall
Prescient, all canvas crowds, so not a breath
Of helping wind to miss, and scuds in hope
To outstrip it,—so fast galloped Sipylus
With loosened rein: but faster followed him
The inevitable Death! Full in the nape
The arrow struck him, and the glittering point
Beneath his chin stood out! His courser's neck
And mane his weight a moment pressed, then prone
Toppled, and with his blood the plain was red.
Heir of his grandsire's name, young Tantalus,
And Phædimus ill-starred, the morning's sport
Had left, and now, in the Palæstra, breast
To breast, in amicable contest, strove
With wrestler's gripe for mastery. Again
The bow-string twanged, and both at once so linked
The deadly arrow pierced:—together both
Shrieking, together fell, together writhed
In simultaneous death-pang; and, their eyes
Together closed;—together fled their souls!
With sorrow at that sight distraught, to aid
Alphenor rushed, and, madly as he beat
His breast, and clasped their stiffening forms, and strove
To raise them, in that pious office died!
Deep through his inmost heart Apollo's shaft
Sped fatal:—from the wound the barb he wrenched,
And with it wrenched his vitals, and his blood

Streamed high in air, and, with the stream, his life.
Young Damasicthon, on whose cheek the down
Bloomed yet unshorn, with double wound was next
To fall. Where thigh and leg uniting meet,
Right in the knee-joint pierced the earlier dart;
And, as he strove to pluck it thence, his throat
Even to its feathered head another pierced,
And, with convulsive throe expelled, aloft
In second flight brief-gleaming cleft the air.
Last of those brethren seven, Ilioneus
To Heaven in vain appeal his hands had raised,
And "Pity! all ye Gods!" he cried—alas!
Ignorant of Two to whom all prayer was vain!
Though even Apollo, when the shaft had left
The string, too late was moved. But of them all
His death had least of suffering, and the point
Just touched his heart, and, as it touched, he died!
Rumour's swift tongue—the people's grief—the tears
Of those around her—to the Mother told
Too well the ruin of her House:—and yet
That might of Heaven she scarce believed, and raged
To think that Gods such vengeance dared to wreak,
And had the power to wreak it. But, by this,
The wretched Sire, Amphion, too, his woes
And life at once with suicidal sword
Had ended. Ah! Who now in Niobe
That Niobe could recognise, who late
Contemptuous from Latona's altars drove
Her worshippers, who late with tossing head
Proud paced the streets of Thebes, by all her train
All-envied?—now, even to her direst foe

A sorrow and a pity! Prostrate flung
O'er the cold corses of her slaughtered sons,
Now this, now that, her kisses press, and wild
With livid arms to Heaven outspread she shrieks,
"Yes! triumph, cruel Goddess! Feed, feed full
"Thy malice with my grief! thy savage heart
"Glut with my pangs, who in these murdered seven
"Seven deaths myself endure! Exult! thy might
"Hath conquered! conquered?—nay! not yet! My wealth
"Even in my misery richer far remains
"Than thine in all thy Fortune! Half I lose,
"And yet with half I beat thee!"—Terrible
While yet she spoke, again the bow-string twanged,
And all, but she, heard trembling. In her soul
Grief had o'ermastered Fear!—With sable robes
And trailing tresses round the funeral-biers
The Sisters seven were ranged. One from her breast
The arrow plucked, and o'er her brother's corse
Sank in the swoon of Death! To Niobe
A second flew, but ere her tongue could frame
One word of sorrowing solace, once again
Unseen the shaft had sped, and in a heap
Huddled she fell, and from her parting lips,
Closed in eternal silence, fled the life.
This in vain flight was stricken;—that, her corse
Embracing died:—one idly strove to hide,—
One powerless trembling stood, an easy mark:—
And six with various wound had bled. Alone
The seventh was left; and wild before her form
The Mother flung her own, and spread her robe
In effort vain to shield her.—"Spare me this!

"My last! my least!" she shrieked—"this little one!
"My all of seven! my youngest! Leave me this!
"This one!"—And, in her very arms, the child
For whom she prayed was slain!——Among her Dead
Childless and Husband-less she sate! Her woe
Froze all the life within her. Not a hair
Stirred in the breeze,—her cheeks were colourless,—
Her eyes were fixed,—in all her form no sign
Of sense or motion. In her rigid throat
The tongue was stiffened, and all course of blood
In all her veins arrested. Neck, and arm,
And foot their flexile uses lost, and cold
Within to stone her very vitals turned:—
Tears only welled unfrozen.——Then there rose
A mighty Wind, and swept her thence, and set
High on a mountain-summit far away
In her fair native land. There still she wastes,
And still the rock is dank with oozing tears.

V. So at the Goddess' terrible vengeance bowed
Trembling, all Thebes; and with redoubled rite
Appeased the Mother of the mighty Twins:
And, in the people's fashion, late events
With past compared. "I mind me well"—quoth one—
"How once of old the Lycian peasants woke,
"To all their cost, her anger. Mean of rank
"They were,—and such with little comment die,—
"Yet strange enough their fate! Myself have seen
"The lake wherein the miracle was wrought,
"Known to tradition yet. My Sire was old
"And now to toil unequal. I was charged

" With conduct of his herds; and, as far off
" Their pasture lay, a guide he sent with me
" Of Lycian birth. And, in our way, we came
" Upon an ancient altar, black with stain
" Of sacrificial smoke, and girt around
" With reeds that whispering waved. Sudden my guide
" 'Be gracious to us, Goddess!' murmured low,
" And I 'Be gracious, Goddess!' echoed him:—
" And 'Whose'—I asked—'yon altar?—to some Faun,
" 'Or Naiad, or some native Deity
" 'Erected, as I judge.' 'Not so,'—he said—
" 'No rural God claims honour here, but Hers
" 'It is whom jealous Juno in her wrath
" 'Forbade the World to shelter,—Hers, whom erst
" 'The wandering isle of Delos, ere its place
" 'Was fixed in Ocean, hardly at her prayer
" 'Received, and, couched beneath its shade of palms
" 'With Pallas' olive mingled, saw her bear
" 'The Twins whose birth so vexed their Step-Dame's soul!
" 'Thence too, 'tis said, Latona—scarce her pangs
" 'O'erpast—by Juno's spite was driven, and fled,—
" 'An infant Deity at either breast,—
" 'To Lycia, where Chimæra erst was born.
" 'The Sun had scorched the fields,—the weary way
" 'And sultry Noon had parched her,—and her breasts
" 'Those little lips had dried. But, in a vale,
" 'A limpid lake she marked, whereat a band
" 'Of peasants gathered osier, rush, and sedge,
" 'And all the watery growth that there was rife,—
" 'And down she knelt, and bent her to the wave,
" 'And would have drunk:—but from the cooling flood

" 'The loutish rabble drove her. What!—she cried—
" 'Ye grudge me water?—Water sure to all
" 'Is common! Nature not for this or that
" 'The light of Day created, or the air
" 'Outspread, or poured the wave;—for all alike
" 'She made them. In the general stock my share
" 'Is all I claim. But, of your charity
" 'Give what of right I waive. I seek not,—I,—
" 'These weary limbs within your fount to lave,
" 'One draught is all I ask. My throat is dry,
" 'My lips are parched;—barely they yield my voice
" 'Its way. One drop of yonder spring to me
" 'Were nectar,—life renewed:—'tis life itself
" 'I beg of ye! Oh! let these little ones
" 'I bear, your pity move!—And, as she spoke,
" 'The unconscious Infants spread their baby-arms.
" 'Was it in Nature such appeal so urged
" 'To spurn?—The boors back thrust her, and, with threat
" 'And jeer inhuman, bade her thence "Begone!"
" 'Nor that was all; with foot and hand they fouled
" 'The water's crystal, and with wanton spite
" 'Stirred from its depths o'er all its face the mud.
" 'Her thirst was lost in wrath:—nor more she deigned
" 'To plead with those unworthy clowns, or stoop
" 'To prayers ill suited to a Goddess' lips.
" 'To her full height she rose, and to the skies
" 'Her hands upraised:—Keep then your pool!—she cried—
" 'And dwell in it for ever! And the curse
" 'Wrought instant. Now beneath the wave they dive,
" 'Submerged and lost to sight,—and now their heads
" 'Rise peering round the margin;—now they cleave

" 'The surface;—now upon the banks they squat
" 'And leap, and dive, and rise again. And still
" 'Their foul tongues rail in quarrel,—shameless still
" 'Beneath the flood they croak, and croaking seem
" 'To strive for curses. Harsh and dissonant
" 'Their voice,—their throats are swoln and puffed,—their mouths
" 'Unsightly broadened gape, and scarce a trace
" 'Of neck, where head and body join, remains.
" 'Green are their backs; their bellies—of their bulk
" 'Well-nigh the whole—a yellowish white. So plunge
" 'Beneath their muddy pool the new-made Frogs.'"

VI. So of those Lycian hinds transformed the tale
One told:—Another, of the Satyr's fate,
Whom, worsted in the contest who could fill
Most musical Minerva's reed, the Son
Of Leto flayed alive. "Alas!" he yelled
Writhing, "Why strip me from myself? I own
"My fault, but ah! too cruel is my doom!
"Too barbarous torment for a paltry pipe!"
And, as he shrieked, the wretch's skin was stripped,
And one raw wound he stood, with blood all o'er
Exuding crimsoned! Nerve and vein lay bare,
And every quivering fibre of his breast,
And all his vitals visible throbbed:—the eye
Might count each pulse of being! For his fate
Long mourned the rural Deities; the Fauns
And Satyrs wept, and, famous in that time,
Olympus, erst his pupil,—and the Nymphs,
And every shepherd on the mountain-side

Who fed his fleecy flocks, and every herd
Tending his horny charge. Earth drank his blood,
His tears,—and from her fertile veins restored
In water bade them gush, and to the sea
Down a steep bed a rapid river ran,
Marsyas, the clearest far of Phrygian streams.

VII. But, from those legends to their present loss
Recalled, Amphion's fate, his hapless race
Extinct, they mourned: and loud on Niobe
Their censure fell. Alone, they say, for her
Her brother, Pelops, wept, and weeping rent
His mantle, and the ivory miracle
Of his left shoulder bared, that at his birth
In fleshly hue and substance matched the right.
The Gods—so runs the tale—what time of yore
His Sire had butchered him, his mangled limbs
Collecting reunited. All save one
They found: but what on the left side should link
The neck and upper arm, was lost. That space
With ivory, wrought to serve for lacking flesh,
They filled, and Pelops so once more was whole.

VIII. From all the regions round to Thebes the chiefs
Commiserating came:—each city charged
Her noblest with condolence. Argos sent,
And Sparta, and Mycænæ, heritage
Of Pelops' later line, and Calydon
In after-time by Dian's anger cursed,
And rude Orchomenos, and Corinth famed
For brass, Messene for its plenteous fields,

And Patræ; nor the small Cleonæ lacked
Her envoy: and Neleïan Pylos sent
Her best, and Trœzen, later by the line
Of Pittheus ruled; and all the towns which lie
Within the Isthmus of the double Sea,
Or from the Isthmus of the double Sea
Beyond are viewed. From Athens only, none,
Strange as it seemed, in all the throng were found.
War barred her from that duty. Round her walls
Besieged, barbaric hosts from o'er the sea
Swarmed countless. But with timely succour came
Tereus of Thrace, and scattered them, and reaped
Great glory of that field. His wealth was vast,
His realm was wide; from Mars himself he traced
His lineage:—and Pandion gave his child,
His Procne, for his bride. That wedlock-bond
Ill-starred nor patron-Juno smiling blessed,
Nor Hymen, nor the Graces:—o'er the rite
The Furies waved their funeral torch—their couch
The Furies spread, and with foreboding hoot
Above the nuptial chamber screeched the owl.
Foredoomed to woe they wedded, and foredoomed
To woe their child was born. But Thrace was loud
In gratulation, and themselves the Gods
Thanked for their happiness, and grateful kept
The day which made them one, and that which gave
Their Itys birth, with annual festival.
Ah! little knows our blindness how to seek
Its weal, or shun its woe! Five times the Sun
Through Autumn's glow had led the circling year,
When Procne sought her lord, and for a boon

Caressing pleaded. "If thou lovest me,
"Give me to see my sister! Let me go
"To her,—or bring her here. No lengthened stay
"Shall keep her:—with that pledge her Sire assure:—
"But give her to these eyes, and as a God
"My thanks shall hold thee honoured!"—On the seas
Instant he launched his fleet, and oar and sail
Plied ceaseless, till within Piræus' port
His anchoring galley rode. The welcome past,—
The clasp of hand returned,—he tells the cause
That brings him, and his consort's suit, with pledge
Of quick return for her he comes to fetch.
And, as he speaks, lo! Philomela comes,
Rich in all choice array, but richer far
In native beauty. Not more fair than she
The Naiads and the Dryads of the Grove
Had seemed, though equal-decked. And in the breast
Of Tereus, as he gazed, unhallowed flame
Was kindled, rapid as when, mischievous,
One fires the dry ripe standing corn, or sets
With careless spark the hay-loft in a blaze.
In sooth, her face was passing fair,—and he,
Sprung of a race for amorous prowess famed,
Was nature-prone to lust, and with his birth
The vice was born and grew. To bribe her train,—
To tempt with lavish hand her nurse's faith,
E'en though it cost his kingdom's worth in gold,
Was his first impulse;—then, to bear her thence
By force, and hold his prize, come war come wrack,
Against all Greece in arms:—no plan too bold,
Too mad for that mad passion, scarce restrained

From wild avowal, chafing inwardly
At every moment's hindrance. Love his tongue
Made eloquent, and earnestly he pressed
In Procne's suit his own. " 'Twas Procne's prayer
" He urged,—and thus 'twas Procne bade him pray,"—
And wept, as though his Procne bade him weep!
Alas! what midnight-darkness overclouds
The blinded sight of man! His very zeal
Seemed but the husband's honest love:—the guilt
That gave his suit its fervour was his praise!
And Philomela lent her prayers:—around
Her father's neck her fondling arms she flung,
And for her weal—alas! and for her woe!—
Besought him let her go! The Thracian's lust
Anticipative gloated as he saw:—
Each kiss, each soft endearment, was but food
Of torch and fuel to the unholy fire
That raged within; and every fond embrace
That clasped her father, made him long to be
That father,—so scarce guilty more than now!
So, by their joint entreaty won, the sire
At last gave way; and warm his daughter's thanks
Flowed for that boon, to both such happiness—
Unhappy! as she thought,—to both such woe!
And now the Day-God's journey nigh was done,
And down Olympus' westering slope the steeds
That whirl his chariot sped. The festal board
Was spread,—with wine the golden bowls were crowned,—
And all to rest betook them. One alone,
The Thracian Monarch, feverish-tossing lay.
Memory each grace of gesture, form, and face

Recalled and heightened; charms yet unrevealed
His lustful fancy drew at will, and fed
The fire within him,—sleepless,—passion-spelled.
And now 'twas Morn. With earnest clasp his hand
Pandion pressed, and, well as starting tears
Would let him, to his charge his child consigned.
"Tereus!" he said—"dear Son-in-law! the prayers
"Of these, and thine, have conquered:—Sister's love
"I own, hath sacred claim. To thee I trust
"My daughter! By thy faith, thy kindred-bond,
"By all the Gods I charge thee, tender her
"As with a Father's care. And keep not long
"This one sole solace of my weary age:—
"Soon as thou canst restore her! Every day
"To me will seem an age. And Thou, my child,
"My Philomela—'tis enough to lose
"One daughter banished—if thou lov'st me, soon
"Back to thy Father's arms, oh! soon return!"
So spake he,—and with many a tear and kiss
The fond appeal was broken. And he clasped
Within his own, in pledge of faith, the hands
Of both, and bade them kiss for him his child
And grandchild, and "Farewell!" he would have said,
But sobs convulsive choked him,—and his soul
Sank with prophetic sense of coming woe.
'Twas done!—the Maid embarked—the foaming wave
Flashed from the rapid oars—the shore was left!
"Mine! mine!" the Thracian cried exulting—"mine
"I hold the prize I craved!"—and scarce he checked
His instant triumph, and with lustful gaze
Dwelt gloating on his prey,—as when the Bird

Of Jove hath in his crookèd talons borne
Aloft some wretched hare, and in his nest
Hath laid her, hopeless of escape, and glares
Cruel upon his victim. Onward sped
The Bark;—the Seas were passed;—the Mariners
Leaped weary to the strand. Not distant far,
Deep in the shadow of an ancient wood,
A solitary Lodge there stood. To this
The Thracian led the Maiden, tearful, pale
And trembling with vague dread of all things strange,
And asking for her Sister:—and declared
Shameless his base intent, alas! too soon
Enforced upon a lone unfriended girl,
Who could but shriek with idle cry for help
On Father, and on Sister, far away,
And the great Gods of Heaven, who would not hear!
A Lamb that, mangled sore, some gray old Wolf
Scared from his jaws hath dropped, and trembling left
Doubtful of life and rescue:—or a Dove
That with her own blood sees her pinions wet,
And every moment dreads to feel anew
The swooping Eagle's clutch:—so, all her limbs
A-quiver, shook the damsel: and, as sense
Returned, her locks disordered wild she tore,
And, with such moan as passionate mourners use,
Beat on her breast, and, with abhorrent hands
Outstretched against him, "O curst wretch!" she cried—
"Barbarous, inhuman for this horrid deed!
"What! were my Father's prayers and pious tears,
"My Sister's yearning love, my Maidenhood
"Entrusted to thy honour, and the faith

"Thou ow'st thy wedded wife,—were all in vain?
"All ties, all kin, thy beastly act hath blurred!
"A Sister wrongs a Sister's bed, and both
"One husband shames! Oh! what, what have I done
"That Heaven should curse me thus? Ay! draw the sword
"Thou clutchest,—steep it in my blood! and so
"Fill up thy count of crime! I would thy hand
"Had stabbed me ere thy brutal lust embraced,
"And so my Ghost gone stainless to the Shades!
"Oh! if the Gods look on us,—if in Heaven
"Justice still dwells,—nor with this crime all sense
"Of right or wrong be lost,—yet, yet thy guilt
"Shall pay its penalty! Myself, all shame
"Cast to the winds, will thy vile act proclaim,
"Ay, to the ears of all men, if I may;
"Or, if thou hold'st me prisoner, to the woods
"I shriek it, and the woods shall echo me,
"And all the air shall ring it, for the Gods,
"If Gods be there, to hear me!"——Rage and Fear
Strove as she spoke within the Tyrant's breast,—
By both impelled he seized her, and her hands
Behind her bound, and from its scabbard drew
The sword his belt sustained. The naked blade
Gave hope of Death, and for the welcome blow
Her throat was ready. But the Savage grasped
With pincers fell her tongue, and, as she writhed
And struggled for appeal, and strove to shriek
Her Father's name, with that unpitying edge
Shore from its base the member!—Back the root
Shrank quivering; on the ground the severed tongue
Yet murmured, palpitating, as the tail

Of some new-sundered serpent palpitates,
And, stiffening, to its mistress seemed to point!
Nor,—horror of all horrors, past belief,—
Even yet his lust was quenched, and on the form
So maimed again his filthy rape was wrought!
  So, laden with that crime to Procne back
He dares to go:—and Procne's first demand
Is for her Sister. "Ah!" he cries—and tears
And sighs attest his tale,—"upon the Seas
"Our Philomela died!" Her funeral rites
His lying tongue narrates. Could Procne guess
The falsehood? From her shoulders white she rent
The mantle golden-fringed, and robed in black,
As mourners use, an empty tomb she reared,
And with all pious honours sought to soothe
The fancied Shade, and for her Sister's fate,
Not so to be lamented, made lament.
  So through the Signs of Heaven the circling Sun
Wore out a year. What help was Philomel's,
Prisoned and guarded in those dungeon-walls
Of massive stone, and impotent to tell
The horrid act that wronged her?—Ah! but Grief
Hath gift to find a vent, and Misery
Breeds wit at need. Upon the loom she hung
Her canvas, and with purple thread and white
Inwove the picture of her shame, and gave
To one who served her the completed work,
And bade her, with such gesture as she could,
To bear it to the Queen. Unknowing what
She bore, she bore it. And the Queen unloosed
The tie that bound the mantle's roll, and read

The miserable tale of guilt and shame
Her sister's hand had traced. No word she spoke—
How she forbore, I marvel!—but her grief
O'ermastered speech, and words, if words had come,
Had been but poor conveyancers to speak
The passion of her soul. Nor e'en for tears
Can she find time. All reck of right or wrong
Abandoned, from that hour her one sole thought
Is vengeance!—'Twas the season when the Dames
Of Thrace were wont to celebrate the rites
Triennial of the Wine-God. In the mirk
Of midnight was the solemn hour:—the slopes
Of Rhodope with cymbal-clash and clang
At midnight echoed:—from her palace-gates
At midnight passed the Queen, equipped to lead
The frantic worship, in such guise arrayed
As best beseemed the frenzy of the hour.
A vine-wreath bound her brows;—her weaker side
A pendent deer-skin draped; and balanced o'er
Her shoulder played the thyrsus' lance-like wand.
Swift through the forest, with her matron-band
Attendant, terrible she sped. To those
Who followed seemed it as if Bacchic rage
Inspired her, ignorant of the proper wrong
That roused her fury. To the lodge she came,
And shrieking "Evohe! Evohe!" burst the gates
And seized the captive. Round her brows she flung
The ivy ensigns of the God, and back
Within her palace-walls the astounded maid
Dragged hurrying. All too well felt Philomel
Whose halls accurst she entered:—through her veins

An icy shudder ran, and from her cheeks
Pale terror drove the blood. But, safe within,
Her sister plucked the garland from her brows,
And stooped upon the face that shrank with shame,
And fondly would have clasped her. She—poor wretch!—
Not dared her eyes to raise:—she could but feel
That sister wronged, herself the guilty cause!
Though still, while drooped her glance, her eloquent hands,
The one voice left her, strove, as best they could,
To call the Gods to witness, that her will
Was innocent of her crime. But Procne's wrath
Burnt hotter as she saw, and with fierce words
Broke on her sobs:—"No time is this for tears!
"Steel, steel alone must aid us, or if yet
"Than steel be weapon deadlier! So I wreak
"This vengeance, come what guilt may come, my soul
"Is fixed to dare it! O'er the wretch's head
"Or if I fire his hall, and watch him writhe
"And shrivel in its blazing,—from his throat
"Tear forth his lying tongue,—sear out his eyes,—
"Or from his foul trunk lop the offending part
"That wrought thy shame,—He dies! I see not yet
"My pathway clear,—but, at all cost, he dies!"
So as she raved, came Itys:—on her soul
Flashed horrid inspiration:—there, there stood
The weapon that she lacked! With terrible glance
Fixed on the boy, "Too like, too like thy sire!"
She muttered, nor more spoke: but mute within
The fierce fell resolution gathered shape,
And steeled itself to act. But as the boy
Sprang to his parent's side, and round her neck

Twining his little arms, with child-like words
Of fond endearment, mixed with many a kiss,
Clasping embraced her, for a moment yet
Within her soul the Mother stirred, and half
Her purpose quailed:—involuntary tears
Moistened her eyes. But, conscious that the Wife
Was melting in the Mother, quick she turned
Upon her Sister's face her glance, and, both
By turns beholding,—"Why should this"—she cried—
"With fondling accents speak, and that be mute
"For lack of tongue to frame them? If he calls
"Me 'Mother,'—why can she not 'Sister' say?
"Bethink thee well, Pandion's child, what spouse
"Yet calls thee wife! Unworthy of thy blood!
"Degenerate!—Tereus?—all regard of him
"Is guilt in thee!" And pitiless she seized
The child, as fierce the Indian tigress gripes
Amid the forest-glades the sucking fawn.
Alas! in that lone chamber never ear
Might hear what passed! In vain the little hands
Suppliant were spread! in vain the little voice
"Oh! mother! mother!" shrieked, and, as he saw
His fate, in vain his mother's neck his clasp
Strove to embrace. With unaverted look
'Twixt chest and rib the ruthless steel she drove,—
Wound deep enough for death,—but Philomel
With a sharp knife across his tender throat
The bloody work made sure:—and both at once
The limbs, yet quivering with some show of life
Asunder tore! These in the caldron boil,—
These on the spit turn hissing as they roast,—

In gore the chamber swims! Then to the feast
The wife her husband summons, with some tale
Of old paternal rite that suffers none
Save him to share it, barring from the board
All comrades, all attendants. And the sire
Unconscious, on the throne whereon his race
Were wont to banquet seated, down his throat
His proper entrails crams! The Night of Fate
Blinds all his sense! "Now bring me Itys! bring
"My boy!" he cries. Nor longer Procne bore
To hide her horrid triumph, and, herself
Hot to avow her crime, "Within thyself"—
She cried—"is what thou seekest!" Wondering round
He looked, nor caught her meaning, and once more
"Bring Itys!" he began:—but, as he spake
Fierce through the chamber-door sprang Philomel,
Her tresses foul with clotted gore, and flung
Full on the fatal board, before his eyes,
His offspring's bloody head!—Nor ever yet
Missed she so much her ravished speech as now,
To vent her glory of that fell revenge
In words that matched her deed!—With fearful yell
The Thracian from him spurned the accursèd board,
Calling the Snaky Sisters of deep Hell,
With curse on curse, to seize them! impotent
Endeavouring with convulsive hefts to free
His stomach of the horrid load whose taste
Dwelt on his loathing palate—his own flesh—
Yet undigested! Now he wept, now called
Himself his Itys' living tomb;—now wild
His sword he seized, and round the hall pursued

Pandion's daughters. But, like birds, they seemed
To baffle him,—and what they seemed, they were;
Birds both. One sought the woodland-shades, and one
Wheeled round the Palace-roof. But still on each
That horrid deed some traces left, and each
Upon its plumage bore a sanguine tint.
Himself too, in that heat of grief and chase
Borne furious, changed to kindred shape. A bird
He soared, whose head with threatening crest is crowned,
With beak immoderate, pointed weapon-like
As bent to slay. Greece calls him Epops now.
So these were changed:—and the sad story, borne
To Athens, ere the fulness of his days
With sorrow sent Pandion to the Shades.

IX. Him next succeeding to Erectheus fell
Sceptre and regal sway, though, if by right
Or force, is doubtful. Four his sons, and four
His daughters, two alike above the rest
For beauty famed. Æolian Cephalus
Was blessed with Procris' hand, and Boreas sought
Her sister Orithyia. But his birth
From Thrace, and Tereus' recent tragedy,
Discredited his suit; and long he urged
In vain, with all soft arts that lovers use,
Disdaining ruder pressure, her he loved.
But, when all gentler wooing naught availed,
The wonted native violence woke that fills
Each blast he breathes. "'Tis well!" he cried—"What else
"Had I to look for? I, who spared to use

"My proper arms, the power and might, the rude
"Resistless strength I own, and stooped to sue
"In prayers that ill become me! Force alone
"My weapon is! By force I drive the clouds,—
"By force I shake the seas, and from their roots
"Uprend the gnarlèd oaks;—the drifted snows
"Freeze into icy mass, or pelt in storm
"Of hail upon the rattling Earth!—When high
"Aloft I brave my brethren of the skies,
"In the wide realm of air, my proper field,
"With such a shock I meet them, that all Heaven
"Breaks into thunder as we clash, and struck
"From the colliding clouds the lightning-fire
"Brief-flashing blazes! Or, when underneath
"I fill the hollow of the world, and roar
"Pent in its cavernous depths, the very Shades
"Confess me trembling, and the whole huge globe
"Is rocked with quaking terror! Thus, 'twas thus
"I should have claimed Erectheus' child, and so
"By force, not prayer, have won her from her Sire!"
So raved the angry God, and shook his wings,
And o'er all Earth a shiver ran, and all
The waves of Ocean trembled into foam.
A pall of dust o'er all the hills he flung,
And all the plain before him swept, and, veiled
In the dense cloud he gathered, pale with fear
Seized in his tawny arms the Maid, and bore
Aloft,—his passion kindling as he flew
To fiercer heat:—nor once he checked his course
Impetuous through the air, till, far in Thrace,
The realm and people of the Cicones

Received him with his prize. So there the Lord
Of that bleak kingdom wedded her, nor long
It was ere twins she bore him, both in form
With all their Mother's grace adorned, and like
Their Sire in wings alone. Not with their birth
Those pinions came; but, ere their auburn locks
Were matched with answering beard, young Calaïs
And Zethes grew unplumed: nor, till the boys
Waxed into youthful vigour and the down
Bloomed on their cheeks, from either shoulder sprang
The bird-like gift of wings. And, in the prime
Of early manhood, with the Minyad band,—
The first who ploughed with Argo's venturous keel
The Euxine's virgin-wave,—they sailed, in quest
Of that famed Fleece whose wool was ruddy gold.

THE

METAMORPHOSES

OF

PUBLIUS OVIDIUS NASO

BOOK VII.

THE METAMORPHOSES.

BOOK VII.

I. Thessalian Argo, with her Minyad crew,
Was now upon the Seas:—the realm was left
Where Phineus wore away in lifelong-dark
His miserable age, and from his board
The Boread Twins had driven the Harpy-pest
Half-woman and half-bird. And, many a toil
O'ercome, the gallant band whom Jason led
Where rapid Phasis laves his slimy shores
Had moored, and from Æætes claimed the Fleece
That Phryxus brought, and from the Monarch heard
What triple labours, fearful, perilous,
Must be essayed to win it. But within
The bosom of his Daughter kindling glowed
Unwonted fires, nor all her reason's force
The growing flame could quench. "In vain"—she cried—
"Medea! dost thou strive! Some Deity
"Resists thee! Ah! this passion sure, or one
"Resembling this, must be what men call Love!
"Why should my Sire's conditions seem too hard?

"And yet, too hard they are! Why should I shake
"And tremble for the fate of one whom scarce
"These eyes have looked on twice? Whence comes this fear
"I cannot quell? Unhappy! from thy breast
"Dash out these new-lit fires!—Ah! wiser far
"If so I could!—But some new Power constrains,
"And Reason this way points, and that way Love.
"I see and know the better path, and tread
"The worse. Must thou, a Princess, born of Kings,
"Burn for a Stranger thus? Art thou to seek
"From lands unknown a Spouse? Hath Colchis none
"Worthy thy love?—If Jason live or die
"Rests in the will of Heaven:—yet, let him live!—
"That prayer at least may without Love be prayed,—
"For what has Jason done? Ah! hard were she
"And cruel, whom his youth, his race, his fame,
"Stirred not to pity! harder far, though these
"Were lacked, whose bosom that fair face and form
"Could fail to move, as, all too well I feel,
"They move my own! If I not help him, fierce
"Those terrible bulls will blast him with their fires!
"The seed he sows will spring in Earth-born crop
"Of armèd foes to slay him! or his limbs
"Be flung a fearful feast to that dread snake
"That guards the prize he seeks!—If this I bear
"Some tigress was my mother, and my heart
"Within is rock or iron!—Why not more?
"Not gaze and gloat upon his dying pangs,
"And with that spectacle these guilty eyes
"Make guiltier yet?—and halloo on the bulls

"To scorch him,—and those terrible Earth-born foes
"To slay,—that sleepless Dragon to devour?—
"Forbid it, Gods! Yet what my need to pray
"To Gods, when *I* can save him? But, for this,
"Must I be traitor to my land and Sire,
"And rescue by my aid this wandering Greek,
"That, saved by me, without me he may spread
"His homeward sails, and leave Medea here
"To meet the doom she merits?—If of this
"His soul were capable—could he to me
"Another dare prefer—why, let the Wretch
"Perish, as he deserves! No! no! his face
"Forbids the thought! Nobility of soul
"Is stamped too clear on that fair front, for doubt
"Of faithless fraud or base ingratitude!
"Yet he shall pledge him first:—the Gods his oath
"Shall witness to our covenant! What to fear
"Is left thee then? Up! gird thee! for delay
"Is Death! For aye thy debtor for his life
"Preserved must Jason be! and torch and rite
"His honoured wife will make thee, and through all
"Pelasgian cities shall their matrons hail
"The Saviour of their Prince!—Ah! thus then, thus
"My Sister, Brother, Sire, my natal soil,
"My country's Gods, do I desert, and fly
"To exile with the winds?—My Sire is stern,
"Our land is barbarous:—my Brother yet
"An infant:—for my Sister, with my own
"Her vows are one:—and, for the Gods,—within
"This bosom beats the Greatest! Little 'tis
"To lose, and much to win! Fame, to have saved

"This flower of all Achaian youth, and sight
"And knowledge of a nobler land, where tower
"The cities of whose glory Fame even here
"Loud rumours, and the culture and the arts
"That grace the life of Heroes! More than all
"I win me Æson's son, for whom the world
"With all its treasures were but cheap exchange!
"Oh bliss! to be his wife, his envied wife,
"Dear to his kindred-Gods! My head will touch
"The very stars with rapture! What if rocks,
"As Rumour speaks, clash justling in our track
"Athwart the Seas, and fell Charybdis, foe
"To ships, with flux and reflux terrible
"Swallows and spouts the foam-flood?—What if, girt
"With serpents, in Sicilian ocean-caves
"Devouring Scylla barks?—The Seas for me,
"Clasped to the bosom of the man I love,
"Will wear no terrors:—or, within his arms,
"If fear should rise, 'twill be, not for myself,
"But only for my Husband. Husband?—Ah!
"With what fair name, Medea, dost thou cloak
"Thy purposed crime? Ah! think, how great the guilt
"Thou darest, and, while yet thou canst, escape!"
So, to herself, she ended; conjuring up
All images of Right, and Faith, and Shame,
And natural Duty: till,—that battle lost—
Defeated Cupid fled. Then to the shrine
Of Hecate, buried in the secret shade
Of neighbouring woods, she took her way, composed
And strong in better purpose:—in her veins
That fever-flush subdued. When lo! the son

Of Æson crossed her path! The fire, that seemed
Extinguished, woke again. A roseate flush
Dyed cheek, and neck, and breast:—and, as a spark
Latent 'neath shrouding ashes, fed with breath
Of fanning air revives, and bursts, with force
Renewed, in upward flame,—so, as she saw
That presence there, the passion that but now
Had languished, well-nigh dead, blazed forth again!—
Never more fair he looked than on that morn.
Forgive her for her loving! as her gaze
Dwelt on him, never, felt she, till that hour
Had she known half his charms. Than mortal more
Seemed what she looked on; and her spell-bound eyes
Lacked force to tear them from so sweet a sight!
But when he spoke, and took her hand, and pressed,
And with soft earnest tones and low besought
Her help, and for such service pledged his faith,
His heart, his hand,—she broke in plenteous tears:—
"Too well"—she said—"I see what 'tis I do!
"And, if I err, not Ignorance but Love
"Misleads me!—Yes! I save thee! but swear thou
"That, saved, thou keep thy promise!" Eagerly
By triple Hecate's dread Divinity
And all that grove held sacred,—by the Sun,
All-seeing Father of his Sire-in-law
To be,—and by all perils he must dare,
And by the glorious prize he hoped to win
So helped,—he swore:—and trustingly she heard,
And armed him with strange herbs of magic power,
And taught their use and service. So, elate
With hope, he parted.——When Aurora next

Before her drove the paling stars, the Field
Of Mars was black with thronging multitudes,
And, purple-robed and ivory-sceptred, sate
The Monarch in the midst. And brazen-hoofed
And adamantine-throated, snorting flames,
Came forth the bulls:—where'er they breathed, the grass
In the hot vapour shrivelled. With such roar
As bursts from some huge oven's laden womb,
Or when the furnace' sweltering mass out-poured
Hisses in smoke beneath the sprinkled flood,
Issued the fierce breath from those glowing chests
And fiery throats. But, fearless, Æson's son
Stood forth to meet them. Terrible they turned
On that bold foe their shaggy fronts and horns
With iron armed, and loud with cloven hoof
Beat into dust the earth, and all the air
With smoky snorting clouded. Terror chilled
The Minyæ as they saw. But he—so well
That magic aid availed—secure approached,
Nor felt the fires their nostrils flashed, and took
Each pendent dewlap in his better hand,
And patted, and o'er each submissive neck
Flung calm the yoke, and drave them, through the plain
Dragging the keen tooth of the unwonted share.
All Colchis gazed astounded, and a shout
Of triumph from the Minyæ broke, and cheered
Their Hero. From a brazen helmet next
The serpent-teeth he took, and scattering, sowed
Along the new-drawn furrows. And the seeds,
Steeped in some potent drug, at touch of Earth
Softened, and warmed, and germed in wondrous form

Of life. As,—pent within the mother's womb,
The burden gradual rounds its little limbs
To baby-shape, nor, till mature, essays
The common air of Heaven,—so these, within
The pregnant soil, though quicker far, assumed
Feature and bulk of man, and, perfect so,
Sprang from the labouring field! More marvel yet!—
A host of Warriors ready-armed they sprang!
And all along the rank their levelled spears
Were poised to hurl at Jason! And the cheeks
Of all the Minyæ blanched, and all their hearts
Were faint with fear. Even she herself, whose art
Ensured his safety, trembled as she saw
At one alone the threatening lances point
Of all that host, and pale she turned, and sank
Cold-shivering, in her place: and, lest the charms
He bore should fail him, murmured low a spell
Of helping power, and summoned every force
Of magic to her aid. But Jason flung
Amid the band a stone, and all their wrath
Was straightway turned upon themselves! Each son
Of Earth his brother slew!—With mutual wounds
In civil strife they perished! Loud the Greeks
Sent forth a gratulant shout, and thronged around
And clasped the Victor in their arms. And thou,
O Maid of Colchis, did thy soul not burn
To clasp him too?—Ah! with what passionate arms
Around him hadst thou clung, but only shame
The impulse barred, and maiden purity,
Yet shrinking, held thee back. But silently
Thy bosom glowed with triumph, and thy thanks

In inward chant were uttered to the Powers
Who taught thy spells. But yet there lacked to lull
To sleep that sleepless Dragon, terrible
With crest and triple tongue and hookèd fangs,
That watched the Fleece of Gold.—For that last toil
Some sprinkled drops of magic juice expressed
From Lethe's herbage, and some mystic words
Thrice-said, of power to win all breathing thigns
To sleep, to smooth all rivers, yea, to calm
The turbulent sea, sufficed. The monstrous eyes
Closed in unwonted slumber,—and the Fleece
Was Jason's! And, in triumph, with that spoil
And her to whom he owed it,—spoil herself
As dear,—his wedded wife, beside him borne,
Back to Iolcos' port the Argo sped.

II. Matrons and Sires throughout all Thessaly
For sons restored made offering: high to Heaven
The incense smoked; round many a victim's horns
The golden fillet glittered. But such rite
No more might Æson share, whom to the grave
Long tale of years made neighbour. To his wife
Spoke Jason. "O my Spouse, to whom I owe
"My safety and all else,—for all my debts
"To thee pass count and credence,—if thy spells
"Can work—what can they not?—this one boon more,
"Take from my life some of its useless years,
"And add them to my Sire's!" With tears he spoke,
And with the pious speech her soul was moved,
Ah! how unlike his own!—What filial love
Had she to old Æætes shown?—The thought

Smote on her, but she crushed it:—and "What prayer"
She said—"unhallowed from thy blameless lips
"Escapes, my Husband! Nor may art of mine
"To any else thy share of life transfer,
"Nor this great Hecate sanctions, nor may'st thou
"With justice ask. But Jason, I can task
"My skill to better boon than this thy love
"Demands, and lengthen out thy Father's years,
"Nor borrow thine to piece them;—so the Power
"Of triform Hecate favouring deign to aid
"The bold design." Three nights were wanting yet
To fill up Luna's horns, and round her face
To perfect orb: and, on the third, when full
And fair on Earth her circle looked, the Queen
Passed from the palace-gates. Her robe was girt
Succinct—her feet unsandalled;—loose her hair
O'er her white shoulders hung:—and in the deep
Dead silence of the midnight forth she took
Her devious way, alone. Man, bird, and beast
Were sunk in slumber; not a murmur stirred
The hedges,—every leaf was motionless,—
Breathless the humid air; alone the Stars
Gleamed tremulous:—and thrice to these she spread
Her arms, and thrice with water from the stream
Her tresses dashed, and thrice with mystic shriek
Her lips unloosed, and to the bare Earth bowed
Her knee:—and "Hear me, Thou,"—she prayed—"Great Night!
"Best veil of secret rites! and Ye, fair Stars
"With Luna following on day's fiercer fires,
"And Thou, dread Hecate! triple Power, who know'st

" Whate'er I would, and aidest,—and Thou, Earth!
" Rich in all wealth of potent growth by art
" Of rune and spell with magic force imbued,—
" And Ye, all spirits of the Breeze, the Hill,
" The Stream, the Lake,—all Gods that haunt the Grove
" Or love the Night,—be present! by whose aid
" My art hath turned, betwixt their wandering banks
" Back to their founts the Rivers,—waked the wrath
" Of the calm Sea, or charmed its wrath to calm,—
" Scattered or massed the storm-clouds, and let loose
" Or chained the Winds,—and with one muttered word
" Locked the fell Serpent's jaws,—torn up the rocks,—
" Rent from its base the oak,—and made the woods
" And all the hills to quake, the Earth to groan,—
" And from their tombs called forth the unwilling Ghosts,—
" Dragged from her place the Moon, despite the clang
" Of cymbals clashed to ease her labouring hour,—
" Ay, and with magic chant made reel in Heaven
" My very Grandsire's car,—and with my spells
" Chased every rose from waked Aurora's cheek!
" Your aid it was, ye Powers, that quenched the flames
" Breathed from those terrible bulls, and to the yoke
" Their necks, impatient of all burden, bowed;—
" That kindled in the Snake-born host that strife
" Intestine,—lulled to sleep the monstrous eyes
" That watched the Fleece, and from its baffled guard
" To grace our Grecian cities tore the prize!
" Oh! grant me now some juice of power to tinge
" Anew with youthful bloom the withered cheek,
" And back recall the prime of vanished years!
" Ye will! ye will! not idly yonder Stars

"Twinkle assent! not idly from the Skies
"Yon wingèd Dragons whirl the Car that, while
"I speak, is here!" And to her side the Car
Descended: and she mounted, and with hand
Caressing stroked the Dragon-necks, and shook
The reins, and soared aloft! Beneath her lay
Thessalian Tempe:—but to wilder heights,
Whiter with chalk, she speeds: and marks what herbs
On Ossa, and on lofty Pelion grow,
On Othrys, Pindus, and Olympus piled
High above all:—these tears she from the root,
These severs with keen blade of curving steel:
And from thy verdant banks, Apidanus,
And thine, Amphrysus, much she culls. His share
Enipeus yields, and Peneus, and thy shores
Spercheïus, and the reeds of Bœbe's marge.
Thy verdure fresh, Anthedon, by the gulf
Euboïc, not as yet for Glaucus' change
Renowned, she crops. By this, nine days, and nights
As many, in that chariot dragon-whirled
Her eager quest had witnessed, and those steeds,
Save but the odour of what herbs she culled,
Had known no nurture;—but that smell sufficed,—
And each dry wrinkled skin was shed, and fresh
Glistened their scales. And homeward bending now
Before her Palace-gates she lights, nor yet
Re-enters:—there, with Heaven alone for roof,
She bides, and, barring all approach of man,
Two altars rears of turf;—to Hecate one,
To Youth the other;—twining both with wreath
Of vervain and what woodland-growth was nigh.

Then trenches twain she delved in Earth, and paid
Due offering, and, with sacrificial knife
Drawn through the rough throat of a sable ram
Filled either hollow with a crimson flood:
And added many a bowl of sparkling wine,
And many a bowl of milk new-warm:—and poured
With these her prayer—to all the Gods of Earth
And to the Monarch of the Shades, and Her,
His ravished Queen, and bade them yet awhile
Forbear from Æson's feeble frame to snatch
The waning life. These, with that orison
Long-urged appeased,—she bade his servants bear
To the altars Æson's wasted form, and there
She laid him, sunk in sleep that looked like Death
By the strong opiate of a chanted spell:
And, waving from her Jason and his train,
Warned them they seek not on the secret rites
She now must work to pry. Obedient all
Departed. Then, in Bacchant-guise, with locks
Loose-streaming, round the altar-fires she wove
A frantic dance, and many a torch she cleft
In splinters, and within the trench's flood
Of crimson steeped them, and, so steeped, to blaze
On either altar flung:—and thrice with rite
Lustral, of water, fire, and sulphur, purged
The unconscious Sire. Meanwhile, within a vase
Of brass her potent medicinal charms
Bubbled and boiled, white-foaming:—many a root
Dug from Hæmonian valleys flung she there,
And seeds, and flowers, and acrid juices harsh,
And pebbles from the utmost Orient sought,—

And sand clean-washed in Ocean's refluent wave,—
White rime of hoar-frost, gathered when the Moon
Shone all night long,—the screech-owl's wings and flesh
Obscene,—and entrails torn from that weird wolf
That sometimes shifts to man,—skin membranous
Of Afric's tortoise caught by Cinyps' banks,—
Liver of long-lived stag,—and head and beak
Of crow that by nine times man's shorter span
Had over-passed,—and thousand nameless things
Beside:—and when the charm was furnished full
With all it lacked, a withered olive-branch
Dried of all kindly sap she took, and stirred
Blent and incorporate all the seething mass.
And lo! the sere wood in the caldron's heat
Grew sudden green, and clad itself with leaves
Afresh, and heavy drooped with berried fruit!
And wheresoe'er the bubbling broth within
Spat forth its hissing drops, the Earth was bright
With verdure, and soft grass, and odorous flowers!
Which when the sorceress saw, her knife she drew
Across the throat of Æson, and drained forth
The thin blood's stream, and, in his veins, instead,
That quickening juice infused:—and, as his lips
And wounded throat imbibed it, hair and beard
Their silver shedding, with the raven hue
Of youth shone glossy dark;—the muscles swelled;—
The wrinkles filled;—and on his cheek the rose
Long-faded bloomed;—new blood along his veins
Tumultuous throbbed;—and every limb was lithe:
And wondering Æson woke to know himself
Once more as, forty years agone, he knew!

III. Bacchus from Heaven that prodigy beheld;
And, taught that thus he might with lengthened life
Repay the Nymphs who nursed him, from the lore
Of ancient Tethys sought and won the gift.

IV. But now, with guiltier art, the Phasian feigned
A quarrel with her Lord, and to the court
Of Pelias fled, a suppliant. Old he was,
And feeble:—but his Daughters welcomed her,
And, won by false assurances of love
Insidious proffered, took her to their hearts.
And, as she told what benefits her art
Had wrought, and for the chiefest counted youth
To Æson's age restored, and on that tale
Dwelt lingering, in their bosoms woke the hope
Of like revival for their Sire. The thought
Was spoken:—on the service let her put
What price she will!—Silent awhile she stood
As hesitating, grave in doubt:—the Maids
Hung anxious on her lips. "I promise then!"
She said—"but, for your greater confidence
"In what I proffer, bring me from your flocks
"The oldest Ram that leads them, and my drugs
"Before your eyes shall make him lamb again!"
And, worn with years untold, his woolly front
Bowed with its weight of curling horns, the Ram
Was brought, and in his shrunken throat, that scarce
Gave blood enough to stain it, felt the steel.
Then in the caldron filled with that strange juice
The sorceress flung the carcass;—and his limbs
Took smaller bulk,—his curling horns fell off,—

And, with his horns, his years :—and from the round
Of that charmed vessel came a feeble bleat,
And, as they heard it marvelling, forth there leaped
A Lamb, that skipped along the mead, and sought
Some mother's milky teat!—Astounded gazed
The Peliads, by such proof assured,—and pressed
More earnestly her promise. Thrice the Sun
Had by the Iberian wave his steeds unyoked :—
The fourth night's stars were shining. On the fire
She set the caldron,—filled with water fair
And herbs devoid of virtue :—and a spell
Of power she chanted, till a magic sleep,
Heavy as Death, on King and household fell.
Then to the unconscious Monarch's couch she led
The Maids. "Why linger yet irresolute?"
She cried—"Unsheath your blades, and drain away
"This feeble stream, and let my juices fill
"With fresher blood these veins! Your proper hands
"Must give your sire new life and youth! Perform
"This duty, if ye love him, and your prayers
"Be not but idle words. The steel, whose stroke
"Lets forth his blood, but kills his age, not him!"
Who loved him most was foremost to fulfil
The horrid bidding :—not to dare the crime
Was criminal! But neither bore to see
The wound she gave :—and, with averted heads,
At random fell the blows. All bathed in gore
Up struggled on his couch the mangled Sire,
And "What"—he shrieked—"is this? What Fury arms
"Your hands against me, children?"—And the blades

Dropped from their palsied grasp! With surer blow
The Colchian's hand arrested speech and life,
And in the seething caldron flung the corse.

V. VI. Then, borne aloft upon the Dragon-car
From vengeance fled she,—over Chiron's haunt
Of Pelion,—over Othrys,—and the Mount
Famed for the refuge of Cerambus old,
To whom, what time Deucalion's deluge drowned
The Earth, the pitying Nymphs gave wings, and taught
To soar unwhelmed above the whelming flood.

VII.–XIX. Leftward she passed Æolian Pitane,—
The rocks that frown in dragon-shape,—the Grove
Idæan, where, in stag disguised, the art
Of Liber hid the steer his offspring stole:—
The wave-washed tomb of Paris,—and the fields
That shook to hear transmuted Mæra's howl:—
And Cos, Eurypylus' home, whose dames to cows
Were changed, what time Alcides swept the isle.
Rhodos, to Phœbus dear, where, evil-famed
For glance maleficent, the wrath of Jove
Beneath the wave whelmed Ialysus' sons,—
She passed,—and Cea's old Cartheïan towers,
Where, from his daughter's change, Alcidamas
Learned how a Woman's form to Dove's may turn;—
And Hyrie's Lake, and Tempe, by the fowl
That late was Cycnus haunted. With all gifts
Of captured bird and forest-beast subdued
Phyllius had sought the youth, and, at his hest,
A bull had tamed. "Give me that bull!" he said:—

But Phyllius, wroth to find his love with scorn
Repaid, refused. "Too late repent then!" cried
The passionate boy, and from a cliff he sprang,—
It seemed, to certain Death,—but in mid-fall
Took sudden silver plumes, and soared, a Swan.
But Hyrie mourned for lost her son,—and tears
Dissolved her to the Lake that bears her name.
Pleuron she passed, where Ophian Combe soared
A bird, so 'scaping from her murderous sons;—
Latona's isle, Calaura, where on wings
Upborne its monarch and his consort flew;—
And on her right Cyllene left, where, more
Like brute than man, Menephron's hideous lust
His mother's couch assailed;—and from afar
Beheld where for his son Cephisus mourned,
By angered Phœbus to a snorting seal
Transformed;—and where Eumelus wondering saw
His daughter rise and bird-like skim the air.

XX. XXI. Back to Pirenian Ephyre at last
The Dragons bore her, where, as legends tell,
Men in their primal age from mushrooms sprang.
And lo! new-wedded in her place there sate
Another!—But that Bride with robe in drugs
Of fiery venom steeped, the Colchian wrapped
In flames, amid her Father's blazing halls
Far-flaring o'er both Seas:—and, pitiless
In vengeance, in her children's breast she plunged
The impious steel, and, soaring high aloft
From Jason's wrath secure, before him flung
His murdered sons! Thence to the Attic towers

Of Pallas sped her chariot, where of old
Phineus the just, and ancient Periphas,
And Polyphemon's child, to birds alike
Transformed, above the wondering crowd had soared.

XXII. And Ægeus, so in all his blameless life
First erring, gave her welcome, and ere long
Made partner of his bed;—what time his son,
Theseus, whose sword from all its pests had freed
The Isthmian pass, unknowing, and unknown
Save but to her, to Athens came. For him
A bowl with deadly aconite she drugged,
From Colchis brought, and from the jaws distilled
Of that fell hound Echidna bore, whom erst
Up through the darksome pathway cavernous
That slopes to Hell, in adamantine chains,
Struggling with vain-averted eyes to shun
The noontide beams, Alcides dragged to day,
Furious with triple howl, and scattering white
Around his rabid foam, that, where it fell,
Coagulate, from the fat and fruitful soil
Sucked nurture, and in growth of baneful herb,
Potent for ill, upsprang,—which from the rocks
The Shepherds cull, and call it Aconite.
This,—urged by that insidious Queen to deem
His child a foe,—to Theseus' lips the Sire
Proffered;—in act to drain it stood the youth:—
When by the ivory sword-hilt on his thigh
Sudden the Father knew his Son, and dashed
The goblet from his hand! And, from the death
Else due the Sorceress wrapped in whirlwind fled.

XXIII. His Son was saved! And glad,—but shuddering yet
To think upon what verge of Death and Crime
Had either stood,—with thankful fires he heaped
And gifts the altars of the Gods, and round
The horns of many a victim twined the wreath.
Never upon Erectheus' Town had shone
A day more glad! King, Chiefs, and People,—all
Held common feast, and, by the bowl inspired,
Broke into jubilant song,—and all their theme
Was Theseus! He, who slew on Marathon
The Cretan Bull, and bade the swains secure
In Crommyon plough their fields,—whose might subdued
In Epidaurus Vulcan's club-armed son.
"To thee"—they sang—"Cephisus owes the death
"Of fell Procrustes! thee Eleusis, loved
"Of great Demeter, thanks for Cercyon slain!
"By thee fell Sinis, wretch! whose giant-strength
"Ill-used, could bow to Earth the tallest pines,
"And with their strong recoil asunder rend
"His tethered victim's limbs! By Sciron's death
"Safe to Alcathoë's Lelegeïan walls
"The pathway lies,—that robber, to whose bones
"Nor Earth nor Ocean gives a resting-place,
"Wide-floating tossed, and hardened into rocks
"That bear his hated name! Thy glorious deeds
"Outnumber far thy years! For thee we thank
"And pray the Gods! To thee this bowl we drain!"
So sang they:—and with chorus of acclaim
Echoing the Palace and the City rang,
And in all Athens not a spot was sad.

XXIV. Nor for his son restored was Ægeus' bliss
Untroubled:—rarely comes a joy to man
So pure that not a bitter mars its sweet!
For Minos threatened war,—in men and ships
No puny foe,—and justly bent to wreak
A Father's vengeance for Androgeus slain.
But, first, alliance of all friendly powers
With cruising fleet he seeks, where'er his name
And fame are known; and Anape, won o'er
By promise, and Astypalæa, bent
By force, enlists,—and little Myconos,
Cimolus' chalky isle, and Cythnos rich,
Sciros, Seriphos flat, and Paros, white
With marble store—where the Sithonian sold
Its fortress, greedy for her bargained bribe,
Changed to that bird of sable plume and claw,
The thievish Jackdaw, tempted still by gold.

XXV. Oliaros, Tenos, Andros, Didymæ,
Gyaros, and Peparethus, green with groves
Of olive, held aloof. And westward thence
Steered Minos, to the realms of Æacus,
Ænopia called of yore, Ægina now
In honour of its Monarch's Mother named.
Eager the people throng to see a Chief
So famous; and the Princes, Telamon,
And Peleus, next in birth, and Phocus, haste
To greet their guest, and Æacus himself
Feeble with age comes forth, and asks the cause
Which brings him. And, so minded of his loss
Afresh, the Lord of Creta's hundred towns

Deep-sighing spake. "A pious warfare claims
"Thine help:—'tis vengeance for a slaughtered son
"These arms pursue! Ah! help me soothe his Shade!"
To him Asopus' grandson—"So, nor I
"Nor mine may aid thee! Closer tie to none
"Than Athens links my faith:—the league is old
"That binds us friends!"—The disappointed King
Turned, angry, and—"That league may cost thee dear!"
He muttered: but, with better wisdom, spared
The war that would but waste his needed powers,
And, threatening later vengeance, went his way.
And lo! while, visible yet, his lessening sails
Grew dim, at speed a bark from Athens touched
The friendly port, and Cephalus sprang forth
Charged with the message of the State;—whom, long
Unseen, the Princes knew, and welcomed glad
With cordial grasp, and to the Palace led.
Stately he was of presence, wearing yet
Much grace of earlier prime,—an olive-branch
He bore;—on either side a youthful pair,
Clytus and Butes, sons of Pallas, stood.
So, with due words of greeting proffered first,
His errand he unfolded, on the faith
Of ancient league and friendship asking aid
To save all Greece from Minos' tyranny,
And pleaded eloquent his cause. The King,
Upon his ivory sceptre leaning, spoke:—
"Take what ye seek, Athenians! 'tis no need
"To ask it:—this my isle, and all its sons
"Are yours:—of all my force at will dispose!
"I thank the Gods I lack not strength enough

"To meet a foe or aid a friend! The time
"With me and mine is prosperous, and nor seeks
"Nor bears excuse!"—"So ever be it still
"With thee and thine!"—quoth Cephalus—"Much joy
"I had to mark the gallant band of youths,
"So fair alike and equal-matched in years
"That met me as I landed:—yet I looked
"In vain for many a face, that well I knew
"When last a guest within these halls I sate."
And sadly answered him the sighing King:—
"Thy words recall a time, whose history
"Begins in sorrow, though in joy it ends.
"Would I could speak it worthily!—yet hear
"A broken tale.—Long since the friends, whose loss
"Thy memory notes, in dust and ashes lie,
"And with them half the bulwark of my state!
"Let that sad preface serve. With direful plague
"The wrath of Juno smote the isle that bears
"Her hated Rival's name. While yet the ill
"Seemed such as man might cope with, nor its cause
"Was known, with all resource of healing art
"We met it; but its deadly force o'erpowered
"All skill, and baffled Medicine fled the field.
"Above us first the stifling air grew dense
"With gloomy mist; a pall of clouds, o'erspread
"Heavy, with languorous heat:—and, through four moons
"Waxing and waning, feverish on our shores
"Pernicious Auster breathed:—and fount and lake
"Were poisoned, and from every waste there swarmed
"A thousand crawling serpents venomous
"Each wholesome stream infecting. On the dogs,

" On bird, and sheep, and ox, and forest-brute
" The pest fell earliest:—next, before the eyes
" Of the despairing ploughman dropped the bull
" In the mid furrow, dead! The rotting fleece
" Peeled from the lank sides of the sickening flock
" Gasping, with painful bleat. The generous steed,
" With many a palm of victory crowned, forgot
" His triumphs past, and at the untasted rack
" Moaned, drooped, and died. The boar his fury lost,
" The stag his swiftness,—and the mountain-bear
" His rush upon the herd:—dull languor weighed
" On all. In wood and field, by road and path
" They laid them down to die. The breeze was foul
" With scent of death! But neither dog, nor bird
" Of prey, nor grizzled wolf, upon that meal
" Would banquet:—rotting where they fell they lay,
" And stank, and with contagion filled the air.
" And now—worse woe—upon the wretched swains
" Themselves, and on the populous city, swooped
" The pestilence. Strange inward heat, betrayed
" On the flushed skin, the vitals racked;—with pain
" The labouring breath was drawn;—the tongue was swoln
" And rough;—the parched lips, gaping, unrefreshed
" Sucked in the tainted air. And couch and robe
" Grew torment! naked on the Earth his weight
" The sufferer flung—nor Earth his fever cooled:—
" His fever warmed the Earth!—And now had ceased
" Physicians' help. Beside the sick the Leech,
" Sickening himself, had fallen;—his very art
" Was perilous:—and whoso sate, to tend
" Or nurse a sufferer, did but share his fate!

" So, desperate of relief, save Death alone
" Inevitable, reckless of all care
" When care might naught avail,—the multitude
" Gave licence to the burning thirst that raged
" Within them: prostrate by the founts and streams
" Or round the wells they grovelled, swilling Death
" In greedy draughts, and, impotent to rise,
" Died in the wave they drank, that not, even so
" Polluted, scared fresh thirsters from its flood!
" And from their stifling beds the wretches leaped
" Or crawled, as strength allowed them, and abroad
" Fled, as they could. Death seemed within the house
" To lurk, and ignorance to the guiltless walls
" Charged the fell pest whose source was unrevealed.
" Wandering, half-dead, while yet their staggering limbs
" Upheld them, some:—some, weeping, on the Earth
" Sank helplessly,—their glaring eyes upturned
" With their last gaze to Heaven,—their hands upraised
" As asking pity from its pitiless vault,—
" Here, there, and everywhere, they gasped and died!
" Judge what I felt, and if I loathed the life
" Too strong, that would not let me share the fate
" Of all I loved! Turn where I would my glance,
" Around me lay my people, thick as falls
" In autumn from the apple-branch its fruit
" O'er-ripe, or acorns from the shaken oak!
" Thou seest yon marble stairs that to the fane
" Of Jove ascend:—ah! vainly there what clouds
" Of incense wreathed his altars! Spouse for wife,
" Father for child imploring, died ere yet
" His prayer was ended, in his hand the gift

" Unoffered clutched! The victim, while the Priest
" Yet spoke the hallowed words, and on his horns
" Sprinkled the wine, with other blow than that
" Of axe fell stricken! As myself, in prayer
" For self, for country, and for children, knelt,
" Lowed with strange moan the Bull, and fell collapsed,
" Scarce staining with pale drops the knife that did
" Too late its work! The wasted fibres lacked
" All signs that speak the warning of the Gods:—
" So to the very vitals pierced the Pest!
" Upon the temple's threshold heaped I saw
" The dead,—nay, at the altar's foot, so more
" The cruel Gods reproaching! Some, with noose
" Self-twined, impatient hurried on the fate
" Too lingering, and by Death itself from fear
" Of dying fled. Nor decent funeral-rite
" Could bear them forth to burial,—with the press
" Of justling trains the City's gates had choked!
" Tombless they cumbered Earth:—or, if some pile
" Unhonoured bore them, round the pile there rose
" Unseemly shameless contest:—for the place
" Men fought, and on the pyre for others raised
" The stronger burnt their dead! And none was left
" To weep them! Child or Parent, Old or Young,
" An unlamented host of wandering Shades
" They flitted! nor the Earth for graves, nor wood
" For pyres sufficed! By such calamity
" Heart-broken, 'O great Jove!' I cried—'if e'er
" 'In sooth Asopus' daughter won thy love,
" 'Nor thou, dread Father, me to own thy Son
" 'Disdainest,—give my people back again,

" 'Or bury me too with them!'—And a flash
" Lit all the Heavens, and following thunder rolled
" Responsive:—'In that sign,' I cried, 'I read
" 'Thy better will, and for its pledge accept
" 'The omen!'—As it chanced, at hand there stood
" A branching oak, the Sire's own tree, from seed
" Of old Dodona sprung. And from its base
" Issuing I marked a train of tiny ants
" That o'er its rugged roots in lengthened lines
" Laborious dragged the grain their foresight stored.
" And, marvelling at their multitude, 'Ah! fill
" 'Great Sire'—I cried—'these desolate walls anew
" 'With citizens as numerous!'—Not a breath
" Was stirring, but the branches shook, the leaves
" With rustling murmur waved! In every limb
" I trembled and my hair stood stiff with awe.
" But reverently the sacred tree, the Earth
" Beneath I kissed, and, though I dared not speak
" My hope, yet hoped, and in my bosom nursed
" The trust my vows were heard. And now the night
" Had fallen,—the weary few who lived were sunk
" In sleep:—and, in my dreams still waved the oak
" Its branches, and the branches seemed with ants
" To swarm, and tremble with that murmur strange
" My waking ears had heard; and from its leaves
" Rained on the Earth below that tiny tribe,
" That, touching Earth, grew larger, larger yet,
" And now erect in ampler stature rose,—
" Their sable hue flung off,—their slender form
" More bulky,—less the number of their legs,—
" And with all feature clothed and shape of man!

"And then I waked, and waking cursed the dream
"With which the Gods but mocked me! But a sound
"Unwonted, as of gathering multitudes,
"Rose on my ears—of that false dream, methought,
"Delusion, lingering yet:—till Telamon
"Broke in, and 'Father! Father! forth!' he cried
"'Come forth! a wonder past all hope, all faith,
"'Thine eyes shall see!' And forth I came, and there
"The crowds I saw and counted in my dreams
"Stood breathing living men! I recognised
"Each form and face, as, with consenting shout,
"The new-born subjects hailed their King!—To Jove
"Due thanks I paid;—my desolate town, my fields
"Untilled, were stocked afresh:—and Myrmidons,
"In memory of their origin, I named
"The race. Thyself hast marked their port:—they keep
"The habits of their birth, a frugal tribe,
"Inured to toil, that wastes not what it wins,
"But stores it, provident of future need.
"These, when the wind that blew thee welcome here
"For Athens favouring shifts, in years and heart
"Alike, for her shall combat at thy side!"

XXVI. So, with more talk and various, waned the day,
And Eve was given to feast,—and Night to rest,—
And with the morning rose the golden Sun,
And Eurus still the homeward voyage barred.
Duteous on Cephalus attend the sons
Of Pallas, and with these the chief once more
Visits the King. The King was slumbering yet:—
But Phocus at the palace-gate received

His guests, and—while his elders Telamon
And Peleus, absent at the muster, raised
Their promised levy,—led them in, and placed
In seat of honour due, and sate himself
Beside them. And, as flowed their friendly talk,
In Cephalus' hand a lance he noted, barbed
With gold, whose shaft was of some wood that seemed
Strange to his eye. "Not little versed"—he said—
"I boast to be in woodcraft and in chase,
"But what the tree that gave thy lance its shaft
"I marvel; were it ashen, sure its hue
"Were darker, and for cornel 'tis too smooth.
"Whence was it hewn? for ne'er till now I saw
"So fair a weapon!" "Ay! and in its use
"Passing its beauty," Clytus said, "Where'er
"It aims it strikes! no chance its course diverts
"Unerring: and spontaneous, to the hand
"That flung it, back it comes, unbrought, and red
"With the slain quarry's blood!" The curious youth
Its story asks, and who bestowed, and why,
A boon so rare. But Cephalus, for shame,
Passed silent half his question, nor endured
To own the price that bought it; and, with tears,
So minded of his consort lost, replied.
"A woeful weapon, Prince, whose mention moves
"My weeping, as thou seest, and still must move
"Long as the Fates shall spare me! 'Twas this gift
"(Would Heaven I ne'er had won it!—) that destroyed
"Me and the wife I loved! Haply thou know'st
"The name of Orithyia and her tale:—
"My Procris was her Sister, of the twain

" In loveliness, alike of form and mind,
" The fairer prize. Her Sire's consent and Love
" Uniting made her mine. And, happy deemed,
" Happy I was, and so might still have been,
" But the Gods willed it otherwise. Two months
" Of wedded life their blissful course had sped,
" When, on Hymettus' ever-verdant steep
" Spreading my toils for deer, at break of dawn
" The golden-haired Aurora looked on me,
" And snatched me, all unwilling, to her arms.
" The Goddess pardon me!—but, truth to tell,—
" Sweet as her roseate cheek, whereon the dark
" And light she parts in blent complexion met
" Of tenderest colour, washed with nectar-dews,—
" I loved my Procris better! Procris' name
" Was ever in my heart, and on my lips.
" And still my wedlock's sacred bond new-tied,
" And all the rights of that deserted bed
" Earnest I pleaded, till the Goddess' scorn
" Was roused, and 'Back then! to thy Procris go,
" 'Ungrateful!' cried she. 'Cease thy plaints! But if
" 'My foresight fail not, that return ere long
" 'Thou well may'st wish ungranted!' and irate
" She drove me from her! Homeward as I sped
" That warning wrought within me, and a fear
" Awoke,—had Procris kept to me the faith
" I had not kept to her? Her charms, her youth
" Were baits to tempt to falsehood:—yet her soul,
" I knew, was pure:—but opportunity
" My absence had supplied—and she I left
" Had proved how woman's passion overleaps

" The bounds of right. All fears that lovers haunt
" Beset me, and I sought but how to find
" What found would break my heart,—resolved to try
" With bribes her chastity. The Goddess knew
" And fed my doubts, and in a stranger's form
" Disguised me, conscious of the change; and so
" Unknown I entered Athens and my home.
" No sign of fault was there—all mark of faith
" And truth:—the mansion mourned its missing Lord.
" Some pretext won me audience, and confused
" I stood before her, and well-nigh renounced
" The meditated trial, scarce restrained
" From instant frank avowal of the truth
" And the fond kisses that I yearned to give.—
" Sad was she, but her sadness lent a grace
" To others' smiles denied:—her absent Lord
" Was all her thought. Judge, Phocus, if in grief
" So lovely seemed she, what in happier hours
" The charm she wore! What need to tell how oft
" I tried her, or how oft her purity
" My suit repelled,—how oft 'For one alone,'
" She answered me, 'I live, though where he be
" 'I know not—and none else!' Ah! was I mad
" With proof like this not satisfied? I was!
" And with my own hand dealt my proper wound,
" And still my proffer raised, and for one kiss
" Such lavish bribe I offered, that at last
" Methought she wavered. Then 'Behold!' I cried—
" 'Tis I who play the adulterer! I who buy
" 'Thy faith with gold! Thy spouse before thee stands!
" 'Himself hath proved thy falsehood!'—Not a word

" She spoke :—but, with mute blush of shame, she fled
" The hateful house and its insidious Lord,
" And, hating for my sake the sight of man,
" Amid the mountains in Diana's train
" A huntress roved. Her flight but stirred the fire
" That burned within my soul. I followed her—
" Besought her—owned my fault—' my stratagem
" ' Was base—to such temptation I myself
" ' Had yielded :'—and, her wounded honour salved
" By that confession, won her back, and long
" In blest reunion lived. 'Twas then, as though
" Herself were gift too small, a hound of price
" She gave me, erst by Cynthia's self bestowed,
" Swifter than all his brothers of the pack,—
" And, ah! this lance which in my hand I bear.

XXVII. " Would'st hear the story of that hound?—Then take
" The tale,—'twill move thy wonder. Œdipus
" Had solved the riddle of the Sphinx, too hard
" For earlier wits; and headlong to her death
" The Pest had leaped, to puzzle Earth no more :—
" So righteous Themis gave her vengeance way.
" But lo! another plague succeeding scared
" Aonian Thebes,—a ravenous beast, that struck
" With terror flock and shepherd, ravaging
" Our folds. Our youth we gathered, and with toils
" Wide-spread the plain encircled :—but o'er net
" And toil light sprang the brute. The hounds were loosed
" To follow :—swift as bird the beast outstripped
" Their tardier pace. With general cry they called

" For Lælaps—so my dog was named—who chafed
" And struggled in the leash: and scarce my hand
" Had slipped it, ere he vanished! Where he was
" None saw:—his foot-mark in the dust we tracked,—
" Himself was lost to sight! Never from hand
" Sped lance, or stone from sling, or shaft from bow
" Of Crete, so swift as Lælaps! To a mount
" I hied me, that o'erlooked the level round,
" And wondering watched the chase,—wherein the prey
" Seemed ever caught, and ever from the jaws
" Of very Death to slip! Nor straight he fled
" Across the plain, but still with shifting course,
" By instinct taught, the too impetuous foe
" In rapid doubles baffling. Not less swift
" This turned, and still one seemed to catch, and one
" To 'scape,—the gripe was spent on empty air!
" At last my lance I raised, but, as I grasped
" Its thong, some chance a moment turned aside
" My glance, and when I looked again, behold!
" Fixed on the plain two marble creatures stood,
" And still this seemed to fly and that to bark!
" Some God,—if Gods of such have care,—had changed
" Their natures, and the swiftest of their kind
" Unconquering and unconquered, turned to stone."

XXVIII. And so he ceased:—" But what the javelin's fault?"
Quoth Phocus—and the javelin's fault he told:—
" But first "—he said—" O Prince, the happiness,
" Which such deep sorrow followed, let me speak.
" A blessèd time they were, those earlier years

" When happy, she with me, and I with her,
" Lived loving, in all bliss and harmony
" That wedlock knows:—not Jove, if Jove's great self
" Had sued, to me preferred,—and not to her
" Venus, had Venus wooed me:—each to each
" Was all. When morning lit the mountain-peaks
" The chase would call me to the woods:—nor train,
" Nor horse, nor keen-nosed hound, nor knotted net
" I needed:—game enough this lance ensured.
" And, when the sport had wearied me, I sought
" The cooling shade, the breeze that through the glade
" Breathed fresh, the air that tolerable made
" The sultry noon, the air whose breath restored
" My fainting forces. 'Come! come Aura! come!'
" So was I wont to murmur—all too well
" I mind it—'to this bosom! let me feel
" 'Thy kisses on me! Come, as thou art wont,
" 'And cool this fever in my blood!' And more,
" So prompted by my Fate, of blandishment
" Would add—'Come! come! my one sole pleasure thou!
" 'Sole charm amid these solitary woods
" 'That cheer'st me and refreshest, come, oh come!
" 'My longing lips await thee!' And the speech
" Ambiguous some vile babbler heard, and deemed
" That Aura, so invoked, some Oread was
" I loved, and of the fancied falsehood brought
" To Procris' ear the tale,—my innocent words
" Adduced to prove it. Love too easily
" Gives faith to what it fears! She heard, and swooned,
" Slow from long faint reviving, and bewailed
" Her wretched fate, so cheated, so betrayed,

" So cursed with faithless spouse. The truthless charge,
" The bodiless name, were torture,—and her grief
" But saw some living Rival! Yet she fought
" Against suspicion,—yet she hoped the tale
" A lie,—nor, till her own eyes proved her wrong,
" Would brand her Lord with falsehood. With the morn
" Again the woods I sought, and when the chase
" Was o'er, the quarry slain, upon the grass
" I flung me, and ' Come, Aura, come!' I cried,
" ' I languish for thy kisses!' As I spoke
" From the nigh thicket seemed some moaning sound
" To issue, hardly marked:—' Come, sweetest, come!'
" Again I murmured,—and the rustling leaves
" Were stirred, as by the passage of some beast,—
" And quick I launched my javelin!—Procris 'twas
" That in her breast received it! Procris 'twas
" That shrieked and fell! Too well I recognised
" In that sad cry, my Wife, and to her side
" Distracted sprang! Half-dead, her vest with blood
" Bedabbled, striving from her wound to draw
" The dart—alas! her proper gift!—I raised
" The fainting form, more dear to me than life
" Itself, and in my guilty arms sustained,
" And with my torn robe bound her cruel wound,
" And strove to stanch the welling flood, and wild
" Besought her yet to live, nor leave that guilt
" Of murder on my soul! Too late! Too fast
" The life-stream ebbed! Yet some few eager words
" She nerved herself to utter,—' By our bond
" ' Of wedlock, Cephalus!—by all the Gods,
" ' By all in me that charmed thee,—by the Love

"'That, as I die, still warm and true for thee
"'Beats in this sinking heart,—ah! grant me yet
"'One boon,—nor take this Aura to my bed!'
"Too late the fatal error of that name
"I saw, and told:—what boot was then to tell,
"When life was ebbing from her?—Yet her gaze,
"Long as it could,—was fixed on mine,—my lips
"Received her latest breath,—and, undeceived,
"Methought her spirit peaceful seemed to part!"
So, broken by his tears, that piteous tale
The Hero told.—And Æacus, and both
The Princes, with the new-raised levy, came,
And to their General gave the welcome aid.

THE

METAMORPHOSES

OF

PUBLIUS OVIDIUS NASO

BOOK VIII.

THE METAMORPHOSES.

BOOK VIII.

I. Now Lucifer unveiled the Morn, and chased
The Night, and Eurus sank: with humid clouds
The skies were shrouded, and for Athens fair
Blew Auster, and before their looked-for time
Back wafted Cephalus with the friendly force
Ægina lent. Meanwhile before the walls
Of Lelegeian Megara, Mars' own town,
King Minos tried his strength, where Nisus held
The sceptre, famous for one purple tress
That, curling 'mid his whiter locks, assured,
Inviolate, the safety of his realm.
Six morns the Sun had risen upon a strife
Whose issue still was various:—Victory
Now these, now those, with fickle pinion fanned.
There stood a tower, high on those vocal walls,—
Where Phœbus, so the legend ran, had laid
His lyre, and with its music filled the stones,—
Where oft would Nisus' Daughter make resort,
And with small pebbles call their echoes forth,

While yet was Peace. Thence gazed she now on War,
And watched the martial contest rage below,
And, in that space, each leader's name, his shield,
His horse, his Cretan quiver, learned to know,
And one above the rest, Europa's Son,
Knew but too well! Whether upon his brows
The crested helmet nodded, or the shield
Flashed golden from his arm, or if he poised
Aloft the balanced javelin,—every act
Lent him fresh grace, so strength and skill seemed blent
In all:—or, when he fitted to the string
Its shaft, "So stands"—she swore—"Apollo's self,
"No fairer archer!" But when from his brows
He doffed the casque, and curbed his foaming steed
Milk-white, with golden housings decked, the fire
That burned within her scarce her reason's force
Could master:—"Ah! too happy lance!" she cried
"To be so borne! too happy reins, so held!"
And, but for shame, down, down among those foes
Her passion would have borne her, or the gates
Unbarred to give them entrance, or aught else
That Minos' thanks might win. And as she gazed
Upon the Cretan's gleaming tents, "Alas!"
She cried—"I know not if this war to me
"Be grief or joy! If War make Minos foe
"To her who loves him, but for War I ne'er
"Had Minos known! Would that myself could end
"This quarrel, and the Conqueror take in me
"His prize, his pledge, his hostage,—what he would,
"So Peace but made me his! Ah! if her charms
"Who bore thee, fairest of mankind, but matched

"Thine own, what wonder if she fired a God?
"Thrice happy I, had I but wings to cleave
"The air, and waft me 'mid yon Gnossian lines
"To tell my name, my love! to learn what price
"Might buy me his!—So only he forbore
"To bid these hands give entrance to these walls.
"Rather I miss the love for which I thirst
"Than so by treason win! Yet oft the yoke
"Of Victor, just as Minos, hath been proved
"To make subjection blessing:—yet this War,
"For his slain son, is righteous:—in his cause
"Strong is he as in arms! We cannot choose
"Methinks, but yield:—and, if that end is doomed,
"Were it not better that *my* love should ope
"Our portals than *his* onset shatter them?
"Better he win us so, ere yet delay
"Cost more of blood—his own perchance!—Ah! Gods!
"How still I tremble, lest some ignorant blow
"That breast should reach,—for sure thy direst foe,
"Not ignorant, scarce could dare it! Yes! 'tis best
"I do it—offer to the man I love
"My country for my dower, and end this War
"That wastes us. Ah! but how?—The sentinels
"Watch ever at their posts,—our portals' keys
"My Father keeps,—my Father! 'tis that name
"I dread,—my Father only bars my hopes!
"I would the Gods could rid me of that tie
"Of Daughter! Why the Gods? We carry each
"In our own hearts our proper Gods, if bold
"Enough we be to know it! Fortune spurns
"The lazy prayers that lack the soul to act!

"Long since had any else, with passion fired
"Like mine, o'erleaped all obstacle! And why
"Should I than all be weaker? Fire and sword
"I dare affront,—but not of fire or sword
"Is question in this strait.—That lock! that lock
"Of purple!—That,—more precious far than gold,—
"'Tis that must win the prize I seek, and crown
"My hopes with triumph!" When the Eve had lulled
The household to that first sweet sleep that drowns
The cares of day, noiseless her Father's couch
She sought, and sacrilegious from his head
The fatal ringlet shore:—and through the gates
Armed with that guilty spoil she stole, and through
The hostile lines, and, confident to win
Welcome for what she bore, to Minos' tent
She won her way:—and, as she spoke, the King
Shuddered to hear her! "Love alone," she said,
"This crime hath wrought! I tender thee my land,
"Its household-Gods, its sway! Thyself is all
"The meed I ask! Accept then of my love
"This purple lock the pledge—no worthless gift—
"For in this lock I pledge my Father's life!"
And to the King she proffered it. But, shocked
At that unheard-of crime, the Monarch shrank
And waved her from him! "Now the Gods"—he cried—
"O shame of this our age, on sea or land
"Deny thee refuge! Never that fair isle
"That nurtured Jove, that calls me Lord, my Crete,
"Like thee shall monster touch!"—And, when his will
Just rule and order in the conquered state
Had 'stablished, bade his crew their moorings loose

And seaward ply their oars. She saw them cleave
The waters—saw her ruined hopes, her crime
Unguerdoned,—and in furious wrath she burst,
And frantic, with wild waving hands and locks
Dishevelled, "Whither dost thou fly," she cried,
"And her who gave thee all desert? who thee
"Held dearer than her country and her Sire?
"Where, cruel, dost thou fly, whose conquest, owed
"But to my crime, should own its merit too?
"Is all that gift, is all my Love, in vain?
"Vain all the hope that but in thee was placed?
"What refuge rests me, now?—My Father's realm?
"'Tis thine! and by my act!—Suppose I stayed,—
"Whom should I seek? my Sire?—'twas I, his child,
"Who sold him to thy hands! Our citizens
"Would curse, our neighbours shun me! I have barred
"All Earth beside in Crete to find a home,
"And that dost thou deny me! Fly then, fly
"Ungrateful! Never thee Europa bore,
"But some Armenian tigress!—Syrtis 'twas
"That from her pitiless whirlpool spawned thee forth,
"Or fell Charybdis, lashed by Auster's blast
"To fiercer wrath!—Jove never was thy Sire!—
"The tale, that tells thy mother in that form
"Deceived, but lies! The Bull that thee begot
"Was but a savage brute whom never love
"Even for his own kind softened! Come my Sire
"And venge thee on thy child! And ye, ye walls
"My treason sold, exult to see me pay
"The penalty I merit! Yet my doom
"Should come at least from those my fault hath wronged:—

"Nor thou, who conquerest by my crime, be first
"To brand it!—If to country and to Sire
"I sinned, to thee that guilt should virtue seem!
"Ah! worthy of thee was that spouse whose lust
"Unnatural in false semblance won a beast
"With monstrous load to fill her!—Dost thou hear?
"Or do the winds that waft thy vessels hence
"My idle words disperse?—No wonder, if
"Pasiphaë better loved that bull than thee,
"Thyself more brutal far!—Alas! his bark
"Is launched,—his sails are set,—his parting oars
"Plash in the whitening wave! The very ground
"I stand on backward seems to shrink!—In vain
"Ungrateful! dost thou fly! whether thou wilt
"Or no, I follow thee! Thy vessel's poop,
"Thy oars, this desperate hand shall clutch, and float
"Or drown upon thy track!" And, as she spoke,
Headlong she plunged, and, Cupid nerving her
To more than mortal effort, caught the bark
Of Minos, and the rudder clasped, and clung,
No welcome weight, suspended!—But her Sire
Nisus—by this to Halcyon shape transformed—
Cleaving the air swooped on her, and in fright
Her hand its hold let go! But not to drown!
The light air barred her fall, and sudden-plumed
A bird she floated, known as Ciris still
In memory of that fatal lock she shore.

II. Due hecatombs to Jove the gratitude
Of Minos, Victor to his Cretan shores
Restored, had paid;—with spoil of Megara

His palace-walls were gay. But now that curse
And scandal of his house, the Minotaur,—
Fruit biform of Pasiphaë's hideous lust,—
Had grown: and in a secret maze, where none
Might penetrate, the Monarch hid the shame
That stained his nuptial honour. Dædalus
Of Athens 'twas, Artificer of all
That age most famed, that planned the work, and traced
The baffling paths, with windings intricate
Whence never he who entered, worn, and lost
In still delusive wanderings, found return.
As in the Phrygian plains Mæander sports
Ambiguous, forward now, now back again,—
And curves, and winds, and inland turning meets
His own descending flood, now to his source,
Now to the Ocean rolling, never sure
Which way he flows,—so of that Labyrinth
The art of Dædalus bewildering twined
The paths, that from the tangle of its maze
Himself scarce found his way. There Minos hid
The monstrous shape, half-bull, half-man, that twice
With Attic blood was glutted. But, when fell
For the third time that horrid tribute due,
By virgin-hands the clue was lent;—the Pest
Destroyed;—the difficult path was backward tracked:—
And Ægeus' son to Dia bore the child
Of Minos, and, ungrateful, there to pine
Deserted left. Deserted as she wept
Great Liber saw and loved her, and in Heaven
Bade shine among the Stars. The wreath that bound
Her brows he snatched, and, upward as 'twas borne

The gems that decked it to celestial fires
Were changed, and took, in glittering coronal,
Their place among the radiant orbs above,
'Twixt Ophiuchus and Alcides set.

III. But Dædalus, at exile chafing now
Too long, and yearning for his native shores,
The Sea in Crete held prisoner. "Land and wave"
He cried, "deny me way! But Heaven above
"Lies open! Heaven shall bear me home! All else
"May Minos bar—he cannot bar the air!"
So spake he, and to arts unheard-of yet,
Passing the force of Nature, bent his thought;
And wings he framed, from short to longer quill
With gradual slope expanding,—as the Swain
Fits to his rustic pipe the unequal reeds,—
With thread the longer binding and with wax
The shorter, to such arch, as curves the wings
Of very birds, inclined. Beside him stood
His Icarus, his boy,—and laughed to see
The light breeze stir the plumes, and, ignorant
That so his fate he handled, with warm touch
Of meddlesome fingers on the yielding wax,
Boylike, more marred than helped the great design.
But now the final touch was given,—the wings
Were waved, and light in air the Artist rose
Triumphant floating. Then he taught the boy
Their use:—and "Midway keep thy course," he said—
"My Icarus, I warn thee! or, too low,
"The damps will clog thy pinions, or, too high,
"The heats relax them. Midway hold thy flight,

"Nor dare too near to soar where Helice
"Shines dangerous, or Boötes, or the sword
"That decks Orion's glittering belt. By mine
"Thy course direct!" And many a precept more
He gave, and careful as he bound the wings
Upon the shoulders of the boy, his cheeks
Were wet with tears, and in the task his hands
Paternal trembled. Then he kissed the child
He ne'er might kiss again, and sprang, and soared,
And led the way, and, as the mother-bird
When first her offspring from the nest essays
The air, he hovered anxious, cheering on
The boy to follow, and with fatal art
Enjoining thus or thus his wings to ply
As he example gave. And on they flew;—
And on their flight the Fisher at his rod,
The Shepherd on his crook, the Hind at plough
Astounded gazed, and deemed they must be Gods
Who so could cleave the air! Behind them now
Far on the left Junonian Samos lay,
And Delos' isle and Paros;—on their right
Lebynthus, and Calymne rich with bloom
Of honeyed flowers. And soon the boy, elate
With that new power, more daring grew, and left
His guide, and higher, with ambitious flight,
Soared, aiming at the skies! Upon his wings
The rays of noon struck scorching, and dissolved
The waxen compact of their plumes:—and down
He toppled, beating wild with naked arms
The unsustaining air, and with vain cry
Shrieking for succour from his Sire! The Sea

That bears his name received him as he fell.
Alarmed, the Sire—alas! a Sire no more!—
Looked round—"Ho! Icarus!" he cried—"My Son!
"Where art thou, Icarus? Whither dost thou stray?"
And on the wave the floating plumes he saw,
And knew his fate, and cursed the fatal art
That wrought it! On a neighbouring isle he raised
His tomb,—whose name, Icaria, tells his tale:—
And, as due rites of sepulture he paid,
A Partridge, perched upon a branching oak
Hard by, exulting flapped his wings, and seemed
For very joy to strain his throat:—a bird
As yet unique, to earlier times unknown,
Whom late the shameful crime of Dædalus
Himself to fowl had changed. His Sister's son
The bird had been. She, ignorant of his fate
Impending, to his Uncle's charge had given
The youth to train:—a lad of twice six years,
Docile, and apt to learn, and turn whate'er
He learned to use. Upon the fish's back
The spines he marked and copied, and with teeth
Of iron framed the saw:—the first was he
Who, linking at one end twin rods of steel,
This fixed and that revolving, taught to use
The circle-tracing compass. Jealousy
Inflamed the Tutor's soul: and from a tower
In Athens down he thrust the unguarded boy,
And with some lying tale of casual fall
Disguised the crime. But Pallas, patroness
Ever of genius, caught him as he fell,
And clad him in 'mid air with plumes, and changed

To bird, and that quick spirit that he owned
To nimbleness of wing and foot transferred:
And Perdix men still call him, as of yore.
But never soars he high in air, or builds
In tree-top ;—low he flies and near the ground,
And in the stubbled furrow or the hedge
Fashions his nest, as though he feared to try
Again the height from which of old he fell.

IV. And now had Dædalus his weary flight
By Ætna stayed, and Cocalus his cause
Espousing gave him shelter. Theseus' sword
Had freed his Athens from her grievous tax
Paid to the Cretan Pest :—her fanes were wreathed
With garlands, and to Pallas, and to Jove,
To all the Gods, with gift and victim due,
From many a censer curled the fragrant cloud.
All Argos' all Achaia's wealthy towns
Rang with the fame of Theseus :—in all strait
Of war or peril 'twas to him the states
Around for succour looked.——For Calydon,
Strong as she was in Meleager's shield,
That aid was needed now. A savage Boar,
Fell minister of Dian's vengeful wrath,
Wasted her fields. King Œneus—so 'twas said—
What time the plenteous harvest crowned the year,
To Ceres gave the first-fruits of her corn,—
To Liber of his wine,—to Pallas poured
Her olive's golden juice. All Rural Gods,
All higher Powers of Heaven, save one, with feast
And rite were honoured:—at Diana's shrine

Alone no incense smoked. And wrath will wake
Even in celestial bosoms:—"So!" she cried—
"Unhonoured am I! but not unavenged!
"The slight shall cost them dear!" and on the fields
Of Œneus sent the wasteful Boar. No bull
Grazed huger in Epirus' meads,—so huge
Sicilia's pastures bred not:—fiery red
His eyeballs glared; upon his neck and back
Horrent as some strong rampart's ordered stakes
Or line of levelled spears, the bristles stood;
Hoarse-grunting jaws his shoulders flecked with foam;
Teeth, like the tusks of India's monstrous brute,
Gnashed terrible; and in his fiery breath,
As though Heaven's lightning flashed from out his throat,
The herbage scorched. Or in the blade the corn
Was trampled, or amid the golden ears
Ripening, that Ceres loves, the spoiler came,
And o'er his blasted hope the Farmer wept:
The threshing-floor was silent, and the barn
Unfilled. O'er all the ravaged vineyard strewn
Tendril and cluster lay;—the olive's green
Of branch and fruit was rifled. Nor on these
Alone his rage was spent. In vain the guard
Of shepherd and of sheep-dog strove to save
The harried fold;—before his herd the Bull
Stood impotent to shield it. From the fields
Men fled:—the City's walls alone were safe,
Till, fired to win the glory of that Pest
Destroyed, a chosen band of gallant chiefs
With Meleager gathered:—the Twin-Sons
Whom Leda bore,—this for the managed steed

That for the cæstus famed;—Jason, whose hand
Laid earliest Argo's keel; and, one in soul,
Sworn comrades, Theseus and Pirithoüs came;—
And Thestius' sons,—and Lynceus, quick-eyed child
Of Aphareus;—and Idas, fleet of foot;—
And Cœneus now from woman changed to man;—
Leucippus, and Acastus skilled to hurl
The lance,—Hippothoüs, and Amyntor's heir
Phœnix, and Dryas;—Actor's either twin,—
And Phyleus, Elis-born:—nor Telamon
Was absent, nor the great Achilles' Sire:—
Came Pheres' son, Admetus,—Iolas
Bœotian-sprung,—Eurytion's ready hand,—
Narycian Lelex,—Hyleus,—Panopeus,—
Echion's speed unrivalled in the race,—
And Nestor, proving yet his earliest arms;—
Hippocoön from Amyclæ's ancient walls;—
And he whose son Penelope espoused;—
And Mopsus, prophet-child of Ampycus;—
Ancæus of Parrhasia;—and the Seer
Amphiarāus, by his treacherous wife
Yet unbetrayed. With these, from Arcady,
Of Tegea and Lycæus' groves the pride,
Young Atalanta came:—her floating vest
A polished buckle clasped,—her careless locks
In simple knot were gathered:—stored with shafts
O'er her left shoulder rattled as she moved
The ivory quiver;—in her hand a bow:—
Fair with such doubtful grace as in a boy
Had girlish seemed, or boyish in a girl.
The Calydonian saw, and at first sight—

But Heaven was adverse—loved:—the hidden flame
He smothered, and "Thrice happy he," he sighed,
"Whome'er thy choice shall bless!" but more the time
For shame forbade; the impending peril claimed
The moment's every thought. With gradual slope
Of densest woodland rose the valley's side
For centuries unfelled, whose height o'erlooked
The hollow. There the hunters met. The toils
These spread,—these slipped the eager hounds,—these tracked
The quarry's trampled path: each covetous
Himself to dare the danger. Down the hills
The rain-floods foaming to a lake had swelled
The valley's brook, with pliant willow green
And sedge and marshy rush and reed and flag
Luxuriant fringed:—and, swift as from the clouds
The lightning flashes, from that lair outsprang
The monster on his foes. Before his rush
The crashing forest bent and broke! but firm
The hunters stood, and with a shout received
The onset;—everywhere the fronting spears
Unwavering gleamed:—but to the hound was woe
That barred his way, or crossed that glancing tusk
Sheathed in his mangled flank! Echion first
His javelin flung, that harmless in the trunk
Of some tall maple quivered. Jason next
A weapon launched, that seemed to pierce his back,
But, grazing merely, too impetuous hurled,
O'ershot its mark. Then Mopsus,—with a prayer
First uttered, "Phœbus! if in honour due
"I e'er have held or hold thee, grant my aim

"Be true!"—let fly his lance. And all he could
The Godhead granted, but the blow that reached
The Beast was woundless;—Dian from the shaft
Yet flying tore the barb: the blunted wood
Was all that struck him. Furious chafed the Brute,—
Like lightning flashed his flaming eyes,—his chest
Breathed very fire! And,—swift, as from the sling
Right at the walls of some beleaguered town,
Fatal to all who man them, flies the stone,—
So, dealing death around, upon his foes
He charged, and on the right Eupalamus
And Pelagon to Earth he dashed:—their Mates
Back bore the corses. Nor Hippocoön's son
Enæsimus escaped him:—as he turned
To fly, the fatal tusk his hamstring rent,
And prone collapsed he sank. And Nestor's self
Had perished, ere the time of Troy,—but light
On his fixed javelin vaulting, to a tree
He sprang, and from its sheltering branch looked down,
Yet scared, upon the baffled foe. Its trunk
His blinded rage endured; and, confident
In so new-whetted arms, Othriades
With deadly rent adown the thigh he gashed.
Conspicuous o'er the rest,—unnumbered yet
Amid the radiant orbs of Heaven,—the Twins
Of Leda rode;—whiter their steeds than snow:—
And either poised his dart, and sure had dealt
No doubtful blow,—but to the thicket's fence
Bounded the wary Brute, where never horse
Or spear might reach him. Telamon, his flight
With heedless ardour following, o'er a root

Stumbled and fell, and, as his Brother sprang
To raise him, rapid from the bended bow
Of Atalanta sped a shaft. Behind
The ear it pierced the monster, and with blood
His bristles dyed. The happy aim with joy
Great as her own the Calydonian saw,
And, quick to bid his comrades mark the wound,
"Be thine," he cried, "the honours of this day!
"Thine first!" But, blushing so to be outdone,
And emulous, with answering shout each chief
His fellows stirred to rivalry;—and dense
The javelins flew:—their very multitude
Their purpose foiled, and justling in the air
Each marred the other's blow. Then on his fate
Unknowing rushed Ancæus:—to the front
He sprang, and "Learn"—he cried—"what different force
"Nerves woman's arm and man's! Give way! This prize
"Is mine! Though Dian's self should guard her Beast,
"Before her eyes this right hand lays him low!"
So boastful spake he, and, in either hand
A mighty axe uplifting, double-edged,
A-tiptoe stood to smite:—but, ere the blow
Was dealt, deep in his groin, where fatal most
The wound, the terrible fangs were clenched; and prone
The vaunter fell, and with a flood of gore
From all his gushing entrails soaked the ground!
Eager, upon the foe, with brandished spear
Pirithoüs sprang—but Theseus from afar
The impulse saw, and "Hold! oh hold!" he cried,
"Friend of my soul! be wise! nor peril thus
"The life I love as mine! Here without shame

" May heroes fight at distance. All too dear
" For his mad daring hath Ancæus paid!"
He said, and launched his javelin, brazen-barbed,
True-aimed, that fair the Beast had struck, but, checked
By a broad beech's intercepting branch,
But half its course achieved. And Æson's son
Once more essayed, but, some ill chance, his dart
Diverting, pierced a hapless beagle's flank,
And pinned the guiltless yelper to the ground.
Then twice from Meleager's hand the spear
With varying chance was hurled:—one point in Earth
Was lost:—but deep within the Monster's back
Quivering the second stood! And while he writhed,
And foamed, and gnashed his frenzied jaws, to feel
From that new wound the crimson torrent gush,
Upon him leaped its author, bolder now
To dare his wrath, and with quick blow on blow
Behind his shoulder drove the gleaming steel!
Loud pealed the shout of triumph from the band,—
And many a gratulant hand the Hero's palm
Clasped eager:—wondering round the Beast they stood,
And "See what space"—they cried—"his bulk o'erspreads!"
And, shrinking yet to touch him, in his blood
Their spear-points dipped. Upon the grisly head
The conqueror placed his foot, and to the Maid
He turned him:—"Take," he said, "Nonacria's pride,
"The spoil that Fortune to this luckier hand
"Assigns:—enough for me to share the praise
"More duly all thine own!" The bristling hide,
The tusky head with teeth enormous armed,
He gave:—and for the giver's sake the gift

Was doubly dear. But through the envious ranks
Ran disapproving murmur;—loudest rose
The cry of Thestius' sons:—"Back! give it back!
"No woman comes betwixt us and our right!
"Nor think to witch us with the charms that fool
"This doting boy, too far from thee removed
"For hope of thine to win him!" And they seized
The gift, and barred the giver's right to give.
But Œneus' son no more endured; with wrath
The insult swelled his heart:—and "Learn!" he cried,
"Learn, ye vile robbers of another's praise!
"How deeds can answer threats!" and, unprepared
For such a blow, Plexippus to the heart
With impious blow he smote! Irresolute
Stood Toxeus, or to venge his brother's fate
Or fly his own: but him not long in doubt
The Calydonian left, and, reeking yet
Red with its first foul stain of kindred-blood,
Within his boson plunged the unnatural steel!
With thankful offerings for her son's success
Still knelt Althea, when that ghastly pair
Of her slain Brethren met her sight. Her wail
Through all the city rang:—her festal robe,
Golden, for mourner's sable stole was doffed:
But, as too soon she learned what hand had dealt
Their doom, her grief was killed, and in her eyes
Hot thirst of vengeance dried the fount of tears.
Safe stored within the palace lay a log
Which erst, what time she laboured of her boy,
The Fatal Sisters on the hearth had flung,
And, as they spun his destined thread, "To this

"And thee"—had sung—"O newly-born! we give
"An equal date!" and vanished.—From the fire
The Mother snatched the kindling brand, and quenched
Its flame, and in a secret closet hid
Preserved, so safe her growing Hero's years
Preserving too. But now she dragged it forth,
And high with cloven fagots heaped the hearth,
And stirred to fatal blaze,—and thrice and once
She raised the brand to fling it on the flames,
And thrice and once she faltered. In her soul
With terrible contest of conflicting claim
Mother and Sister battled! Now her cheek
Paled at the purposed crime;—now from her eyes
Red fury flashed! Now pitiless, as one
Wrought-up and bent to horrid act, she glared;
Now pitying seemed to melt;—and ever, as
The fire that burned within her parched her tears
Love started tears afresh. And, as a bark,
By wind and tide contrarious buffeted,
Alternate yielding, now the wave obeys
And now the gust,—so fared it with the soul
Of Thestius' Daughter:—Now her vengeance ebbed
And now swelled high again, till at the last
The Sister quelled the Mother, and the crime,
Impious, that soothed with blood her Brothers' Shades,
Seemed piety! The fatal fire blazed high!
The fatal brand was raised! and to that shrine
Accurst the fatal sacrifice was borne!
And "Burn!" she cried—"My proper bowels! burn!
"And ye, dread Sisters three of awful Hell,
"Eumenides! exult to see how guilt

" Avenges guilt! Yea, Death for Death, and crime
" For crime, and blood for blood I offer ye!
" Be all our house in one vast ruin whelmed!
" Shall happy Œneus boast his Victor-boy,
" And Thestius son-less mourn?—No! better both
" Should weep alike!—But ye, my Brothers' souls,
" New in that realm of Shadows, own what price
" My duty pays! Your funeral-offering costs
" Your Sister's very blood!—Ah! Woe is me!
" Whither does passion hurry me? Forgive,
" Forgive a Mother, Brethren, if her hands
" Are weak to do you right! For just it is
" That he should die:—I own it:—'tis your due:—
" But not, oh! not from me!—Must he then live,
" Nor live alone, but, glorying in his crime,
" Triumphant lord it here in Calydon,
" While ye, chill wandering shadows, lie in dust,
" Unhonoured, unavenged?—It shall not be!
" Perish the wretch! ay, and his Father's hope,
" His throne, his realm, whelm headlong in his fall!—
" Was that a Mother's voice?—Is't thus the bond
" Is snapped that links a Parent to the child
" For ten long months within her bosom borne?
" Ah! would to Heaven that at thy birth this hand
" Had left that brand to burn! My gift it is
" That yet thou livest:—'tis thy proper deed
" That dooms thee now:—take thine own crime's reward!
" Return the life that twice I gave thee—once
" In that curst hour of travail, and once more
" When from the flames I tore it! give it back,

" Or slay me too, and let one common tomb
" Unite the three!——I burn to do this deed,
" And yet I cannot do it!—Yea, I see,
" I see ye, O my murdered Brothers' Shades!
" And there I see my Son! Ah! Woe is me!
" Ye conquer! but an evil conquest 'tis
" My Brothers that ye win! I follow ye!
" And the same hand that rights your injured Ghosts
" Must doom mine own to join them!"—Then, with glance
Averted, high she heaved the fatal brand
And flung it 'mid the flames! The very log
Or moaned, or seemed to moan! The very flames
Unwilling seemed to lick it as it blazed!
Unconscious, absent, as the fagot burned
Burned Meleager too:—consuming fires
Internal scorched his vitals. Manfully
He battled with his pangs:—yet "Better far,"
He murmured, "like Ancæus to have died,
"Than this inglorious end!" and on his Sire
Moaning he called, and on all names beloved
Of Brother, and of Sisters fond, and Wife,
Haply his Mother's too!—As soared or sank
The flames, now blazing fierce, now languishing,
His fitful torment answered them, till both
In one last flash, one final pang, were spent,
And the light airs received the parting soul.
All Calydon was plunged in woe! Her Youth,
Her Sires, her Chiefs, her People, wept alike,—
And, wild, Evenus' Matrons rent their locks
In lamentation. Prostrate on the Earth
Lay Œneus,—in the dust his hoary hair

Defiled,—and cursed his too-protracted day!
For her,—that sorrow's guilty cause,—by this
In her own blood, with suicidal steel,
The Mother's hand the Mother's crime had paid.
But never, had the God a hundred tongues
Bestowed, and soul to dare the theme, or lent
All music of muse-haunted Helicon,
Never could language hope to paint the grief
Of those heart-broken Sisters! Wild they beat
And bruised to purple all their bosom's snow,
And round the corse, while yet the corse remained,
With fond embraces cherishing they clung,
And shower of passionate kisses on the clay
And on the bier that bore it; and the urn
That held his gathered ashes to their breasts
They hugged, and round his tomb they flung them down,
And clasped the stones that bore the name beloved,
And with their tears the senseless letters bathed.
But now that ruin of Parthaon's house
Had glutted Dian's vengeful wrath!—and all,
Save Gorge, and the maid Alcmena's son
Won for his bride, she lifted light, and clad
With plumy down, and furnished arm and face
With wing and horny beak, and bade them fly
To birds transformed, and range the fields of air.

V. His manful part among those hunters played,
Homeward to Athens Theseus bent his way.
But Acheloüs, swoln with rain-floods, rose
And barred it. "Deign"—he said—"illustrious Son
"Of Cecrops' line, awhile beneath my roof

" To rest, nor dare attempt this furious flood,
" That in its roaring torrent whirls adown
" Whole trees and huger rocks. Myself have seen
" With all its flock the neighbouring fold engulfed;
" The bull, for all his strength, the horse, for all
" His speed, swept helpless;—ay, and, when the snows
" Dissolving from the mountains swell its force,
" The herdsman's self whirled headlong! Safer stay,
" Till to its wonted level sinks the stream
" Pent in its proper channel."—" Thanks, for both
" Thy counsel and thy offer"—quoth the Son
Of Œgeus—" both I take! And both he took.
Of pumice and of tophus rough the hall
Was framed; its floor was soft with humid moss:
The glittering roof with chequered shells was gay.
Now of his westward course two-thirds the Sun
Had traversed:—at the hospitable board
Sate Theseus and his train,—Ixion's Son,
And Lelex, Trœzen's hero, tinging now
With early gray his brows, and whoso else,
Proud of that famous Guest, the River-God
To share the feast had bidden. Bare-footed Nymphs
The viands served, and, when the banquet ceased,
Bright in the crystal goblets poured the wine.
But on the Sea that rolled below them gazed
The Hero—and " How call ye yonder isle?"
He said, and pointed as he spoke,—" though more
" Than one, methinks, it seems." The River-God
Made answer. " More they are;—five separate isles:
" 'Tis but the distance cheats the eye, and blends
" Their outlines into one. If Dian's wrath

" For slighted honours move thy wonder, hear
" Their tale, and wonder less. The Isles thou seest
" Were Naiads once:—upon a solemn morn
" Ten bullocks had they sacrificed, and all
" The rural Gods to grace the liberal rite,
" And lead the dance, and share the feast, had called,—
" Save me, alone forgotten. In my wrath
" I rose, nor ever higher swelled my flood
" Than on that day;—my very waters shared
" Their Master's passion:—tree from tree, and field
" From field my torrent tore, and from their place
" Those Nymphs, too late remembering whom they scorned,
" Adown to Ocean hurried. Ocean joined
" His force to mine: the solid shore was rent:
" And Nymph and shattered fragment, seaward whirled,
" Were fixed in yon Echinades thou seest,
" As many islands now as Naiads then.

VI. " Apart—thou seest it there—another isle
" There lies, that yet I love. The sailor knows
" And calls it Perimele. From the Maid
" My passion erst had snatched her virgin-flower:
" And pitiless her Sire, Hippodamas,
" What time her swelling form her fault betrayed,
" Had hurled her to my waves. I caught her fall,
" And, swimming yet, supported her:—and 'Oh!'
" I prayed—'Great Ocean Lord, whose trident sways
" 'The wandering realm of waters, next to Heaven's
" 'The widest,—Thou in whom all sacred streams
" 'End confluent, finding rest,—befriend me now,
" 'And hear my prayer, Neptunus!—I it was

" ' Who wronged this Maid I bear. Had but her Sire
" ' Been just, been merciful, had but one spark
" ' Of love paternal warmed his impious breast,
" ' His child he must have pitied. Pardon, Thou,
" ' And help us both! This barbarous doom avert,
" ' And give her in thy realm a place, or make
" ' Herself a place, which yet my circling waves
" ' In their embrace may clasp!' The Lord of Seas
" His head inclined, and all his rippling flood
" Assenting murmured. Frightened as she swam—
" For still she swam—against my lapping wave
" Fainter and fainter throbbed her bosom's pulse,
" And, in the time I take to tell the tale,
" While fondly yet I bore her up, I felt
" Her tender body harden, and a crust
" Of earth her form o'erspread; the limbs she plied
" Stiffened to rock: and, waxing as she changed
" To ampler bulk the Nymph an island stood!"

VII. So ceased the River-God, and at his tale
Marvelled the guests. But with his wonted scoff
Irreverent and contemptuous of the Gods,
Ixion's son their easy credence mocked:—
" Tales! pleasant tales!" he cried—" and fanciful,
" O Acheloüs! but too high the Gods
" Thy reverence rates, if thus thou deem'st their power
" Can shift and chop and change us at their will!"
But on the rest displeasing jarred the sneer
Profane,—a moment mute, till, ripe in years
And judgment, Lelex answered grave:—" Immense
" The might of Heaven and infinite! Whate'er

" The Immortals will, is done! Hear what myself
" Of proof can urge. 'Mid Phrygia's hills there stands,
" Fenced by a lowly wall, a spot where grow
" Two trees, a linden one and one an oak;
" These eyes have seen the place, what time, long years
" Agone, on Pittheus' mission, to the realm
" That erst his father Pelops swayed, I went.
" Hard by a lake it stands that floods a tract
" Once habitable, now of teal and coot
" The haunt, and every fowl that loves the pool.
" Thither of yore, it chanced, in mortal form
" Concealed came Jove, and, with his Sire, the Son
" Of Maia, nor by wing nor rod betrayed.
" For rest and shelter at a thousand doors
" They knocked; a thousand doors were locked and barred:
" One only let them in:—a lowly hut
" Of meanest size, rude-thatched with rush and reed.
" But in that humble cottage, early-wed,
" A loving pair, from youth to latest age
" Had good old Baucis and Philemon dwelt.
" Content for them had lightened Poverty
" And easy made its yoke. No difference there
" Of master or of servant;—each was each;—
" The two were all the household, both alike
" Commanding and obeying. Stooping low
" The heaven-born visitors the threshold passed,
" And straight a bench Philemon placed,—a rug
" For cushion o'er it bustling Baucis spread:
" And from the hearth the whitened ashes raked,
" And waked anew her last night's fire, and fed
" With leaves and bark, and with her panting breath

" For bellows puffed it into blaze, and set
" Her little kettle, and with ample store
" Of chips and withered branches, hung to dry
" Upon the blackened rafters, made it boil,
" And trimmed the cabbage that her husband brought
" Fresh from their little watered garden-plot.
" He with a prong meanwhile a smoky chine
" Of bacon from the sooty roof unhooked,
" And from the flitch a moderate portion carved
" And boiled; and, as the simple meal was dressed,
" With chat of country matters whiled the time.
" Suspended from a peg a beechen pail
" Swung by the handle: this, with water warm
" Well filled, for foot-bath served. The bedstead next
" Of willow, from its corner dragged, was pressed
" To service for a couch: its mattress, stuffed
" With sedge, a coverlet, for holiday use
" Reserved, o'erspread—well worn, in sooth, and old,
" But clean and spotless, matching what it draped.
" The Gods their places took. The crone, with skirt
" Tucked up, and hand that in its office shook
" Tremulous with zeal, the trivet-table set;
" And, where one limping leg was short,—she clapped
" A saucer underneath, and, steadied so,
" Sweetened with leaves of fragrant mint the board.
" With Pallas' parti-coloured olive first
" The feast began, and autumn-cornels stored
" In pickle,—endive—radish—cheese new-pressed—
" And eggs amid the embers deftly poached,—
" In earthen platters served. And of like ware
" A bowl she placed, with figures rudely wrought,

"And beechen drinking-cups, with yellow wax
"Assiduous rubbed and polished. Briskly served
"And smoking from the hearth the viands came.
"Wine of the year, yet sweet and thick with must,
"Prefaced the second course, of Carian figs
"And nuts, and dates, and ruddy apples piled
"In fragrant basket, and of plums composed,
"And fresh-cut clusters of the purple vine,
"Ranged round a central honey-comb.—If poor
"The cheer, not poor the will that offered it;—
"And honest smile and hearty welcome made
"The meal a very banquet. But amazed
"The Host and Hostess saw the goblet drained
"Spontaneous fill anew! Invisible hands
"The butler played, and crowned the emptied cup!
"And frightened to their prayers they fell, and begged
"For pardon of that meagre cheer, to Guests
"Miraculous offered.—One lean goose they had,
"Sole cackling guardian of their humble cot,
"And her for sacrifice they doomed:—but swift
"The fowl outran her feeble Lord's pursuit
"And baffled, and, instinctive, to the Gods
"Themselves for shelter fled. The suppliant's life
"Jove bade them spare. 'Yea, rightly have ye judged!
"'Gods are we both'—he said—'as these rude churls
"'Inhospitable to their cost shall learn!
"'But fear not ye! to you no harm shall come,
"'So on our steps ye follow. Quit your hut,
"'And scale yon hill with us.' Obedient both,
"With labouring steps upon their staves sustained,
"And panting, clomb behind:—and now, within

"A bowshot of the summit, round they looked
"And lo! the vale beneath them lay a lake,
"And every dwelling save their own was drowned!

VIII. IX. "Awe-struck they gazed, with natural tears the fate
"Of all they knew lamenting,—when, behold!
"The hut, erewhile scarce big enough for two,
"A Temple rose! Tall columns propped the roof,—
"The thatch was glittering gold,—the floor was paved
"With marble,—and with panels curious carved
"The humble door a stately portal stood!
"Then gracious spake the voice of Saturn's Son:—
"'O good old man, and thou, his worthy mate,
"'Ask what ye would,—'tis granted!' And the pair
"Awhile conferring made their joint request.
"'Make us, great Sire of Gods, of this thy fane
"'The guardian Priest and Priestess, and the lives
"'Together linked through many a happy year
"'Together end:—nor let Philemon's eyes
"'His Baucis' tomb behold, or Baucis live
"'To bear her lost Philemon to his own!'
"The pious prayer was granted:—and while yet
"The Fates allowed, Priestess and Priest they were;
"Till, as one morn upon the hallowed steps,
"Bowed now with years, they stood, and to a knot
"Of wondering hearers told the Temple's tale,
"Surprised each saw the other's figure change
"And sprout with sudden verdure: and, as round
"Their forms the rapid foliage spread, while yet
"They could, one mutual fond 'Farewell' they took,

"One Kiss,—and o'er their faces closed the bark,
"And both in trees were hidden!—Still the boughs
"That interlacing link the neighbour trunks
"Tyana's peasant loves to show:—the tale
"Her gravest elders,—men not like to lie,
"As wherefore should they lie?—with serious faith
"Attested to these ears. The honoured boughs
"Myself have seen with garlands decked,—myself
"One garland added more. 'The Gods'—I said—
"'Are just. The Pious ever are their care:—
"'And Heaven still honours those who honour Heaven!'"

X. He ceased:—the teller and the tale alike
His audience held respectful,—Theseus more
Than all, inquisitive what miracles
Of change the Gods can work. The River-God
Upon his elbow leaning, made reply.
"Some, Prince, there are"—he said—"who once-transformed
"No more of change are capable; some pass
"From shape to shape at will. Example chief
"Of these is Proteus, dweller in the Sea
"That belts our Earth embracing,—now a Youth,
"A Lion now, a raging Boar, a Snake
"Too terrible for touch;—with threatening horns
"A Bull he glares, or in a Stone or Tree
"Lurks hidden, or delusive cheats the eye
"In semblance of conflicting elements,
"And now a River rolls, now flames a Fire.

XI. "Like power had Metra, Eresicthon's child,

"Wife of Autolycus, whose scoffing Sire
"Mocked at the Gods, nor ever with the smoke
"Of incense wreathed their altars. He it was
"Whose impious axe 'mid Ceres' sacred grove
"Dared violate her immemorial shades.
"Huge with the growth of ages in its midst
"An ancient Oak there stood, itself a grove,
"With votive tablets hung and grateful gifts
"For vows accomplished. Underneath its shade
"The Dryads wove their festal dance, and linked
"In circle, hand-in-hand, its giant bulk
"Would measure:—fifteen ells in girth it spread,
"O'ertopping meaner trees as meaner trees
"O'ertopped the grass beneath them. Nor its age
"Nor honour moved the son of Triope:—
"'Fell it!' he cried, and, as the woodman shrank
"That hest profane to execute, himself
"Snatched from his hand the axe, and,—'What! ye Knaves!
"'Dear to a Goddess is it? Were itself
"'A Goddess, soon its head shall touch the ground!'
"So spake he blasphemous; and, for the stroke,
"Slanting above his shoulder poised the steel.
"The trembling tree sent forth an audible groan!
"From its pale leaves and acorns died the green,—
"Dark oozing sweat from every branch distilled,—
"And, as the scoffer smote it, crimson-red
"Gushed from the wounded bark the sap, as streams
"When at the altar falls some mighty Bull
"The life-blood from his neck. Aghast his train
"Beheld, and one, more daring than the rest

" Essayed to bar a second stroke. But fierce
" Upon his follower from the tree he turned:—
" ' So pious art thou?' cried he—' then be this
" ' Thy piety's reward!' and with a blow
" His skull he cleft, and with redoubled rage
" The sacred tree assailed. Then from its heart
" Issued a voice:—' Thou strikest in this trunk
" ' A Nymph whom Ceres loves, and for the deed
" ' Dearly shalt pay! With my last voice thy doom
" ' I prophesy, and in thy imminent fate
" ' Find solace for my own!' But reckless he
" His crime pursued, till gashed with stroke on stroke
" Of axe, and bowed with strain of rope on rope,
" Yielded the tottering tree, and with its weight
" Crushed into ruin half the circling wood!
" Weeping their Sister lost, their grove despoiled,
" Black-stoled at Ceres' feet the Dryads knelt
" For vengeance: and as, gracious, in assent
" Her beauteous brows she nodded, far around
" Responsive all the yellowing harvest waved.
" The suppliants' selves, but that his sacrilege
" All touch of pity barred, had pitied him
" The doom she spake,—to waste by lingering pangs
" Of famine torn and tortured. But, as ne'er
" That terrible Minister from herself her charge
" Might take—(for still where Ceres smiles the Fates
" Forbid the approach of Famine,—) to her side
" She called a sister of the Oread band,
" And spake:—' On farthest Scythia's frozen shore
" ' A sterile tract there lies and desolate,
" ' A corn-less tree-less waste, where torpid Cold

" ' And Pallor wan and shivering Tremor dwell
" ' With ever-pining Famine. Thou this last
" ' Command, that in the sacrilegious breast
" ' Of Eresicthon straight she house herself,
" ' Lodge in his very vitals,—waste his wealth,
" ' His stores,—and with myself and all my force
" ' Strive might and main, and in the strife o'ercome!
" ' Nor let the distance fright thee:—take my car,
" ' And thither guide through Heaven its dragon-steeds.'
" She said, and gave it. On that chariot borne
" Sped through the fields of air the Messenger,
" Nor, till she reached the frozen peaks that men
" Call Caucasus, her wingèd team unyoked.
" There grovelling on a stony plain she found
" The Pest she sought—tearing with tooth and nail
" The sparse and stinted herbage,—all unkempt
" Her sloven locks,—pale-cheeked and hollow-eyed—
" Her lips with filth begrimed—her cankered jaws
" With long-accumulate foulness furred and rough:—
" Through her dry skin her entrails visible throbbed:—
" From her lank loins her craggy hips stood out:—
" What should be belly was a shrunken void,
" A belly's place alone:—her dangling dugs
" From the mere spine suspended seemed to hang:—
" And in her leanness every joint looked huge,
" And callous knee and knotted ancle swoln
" To disproportioned bulk. Her as the Nymph
" Afar beheld—not daring near approach—
" The Goddess' hest she spoke, nor longer stayed,
" For, in that moment, distant as she stood,
" Unwonted sense of craving seemed to wake

" Within her:—and with homeward course sublime
" To Thessaly the dragon-team she sped.

XII. " Obedient, though the Power whose will she works
" Still thwarts her own, swift borne upon the winds
" To Thessaly and that devoted house
" Flies Famine; and beside the midnight-couch
" Where sunk in heaviest slumber lies its Lord
" She stands, and o'er him like a vampire folds
" Her pinions—breathes herself into his frame—
" Steals to his heart with every breath he draws—
" And pours eternal hunger through his veins.
" And so, her task accomplished, from the realm
" Whose plenty seems to mock her, back she flies
" To the bare waste that makes her wonted home.
" Sleep with the fanning of her placid wings
" Still lulls the unwitting king;—but in his dreams
" Delusive banquets tempt him, and his jaws
" Eager he works, and 'twixt his grinding teeth
" The visionary viands champs and chews,
" And, weary with the empty toil, devours
" Mere mocking feast of unsubstantial air.
" But, with the morn's awaking, real and fierce
" In ravenous jaw and craving entrail burns
" The rage of Famine:—whatsoe'er of food
" Earth, Sea, or Air supplies his maw demands.
" At the full board he hungers,—ere one meal
" Is ended for another calls;—what store
" Had well supplied his city or his realm
" Serves but to whet one monstrous appetite,
" That still the more it gorges craves for more.

" And, as the thirsty Sea insatiate drains
" From all the Earth the wandering river-floods,
" Or as the wasting Fire, whose aliment
" All matter yields, from crackling trunk to trunk
" Leaps through the countless forest, and the more
" It burns the hungrier roars for more to burn,—
" The greedier yet for all that gluts its greed,—
" So feeds the impious King, and as he feeds
" Still calls for food: whate'er he eats but wakes
" Desire of eating, and the swallowed meal
" Leaves but a craving void. And in the gulf
" And whirlpool of his ravenous paunch the store
" His Fathers gathered sinks, and less and less
" Is left, though none the less the quenchless flame
" Of Famine burns within his sateless maw,
" Till in his belly all his wealth is lost.
" A Daughter, worthy of a better Sire
" Alone was left him, and to feed his want
" His child he sold:—but to the neighbouring shore,
" Too proud to own a Lord, the Damsel fled,
" And spread her hands imploring to the Main.
" ' O Thou'—she cried—' to whom my maiden-flower
" ' Was yielded'—(Neptune's self that flower had cropped—)
" ' Let me not serve a Master!'—And the God
" Heard her, and changed her form. The purchaser
" Hard following on her flight, upon the strand
" Found but a seeming fisher, with such gear
" As suits his toil employed:—and ' Say!' he cried,
" ' O Wielder of the rod! so may the waves
" ' Be smooth,—the hook that lurks within thy bait
" ' The credulous fish perceive not, till it strike

" ' Fast in his gills,—where did she pass, the Maid
" ' Whom, meanly clad and with dishevelled locks
" ' Standing but now upon the beach I saw,—
" (' For sure these eyes deceived me not,—) which way
" ' Hence did she slip?—for here I lose her track.'
" But grateful for the God's effectual help
" And joyous of herself to hear herself
" Demanded, boldly to her questioner
" She answered:—' Pardon me, whoe'er thou art.
" ' Fixed ever on the waters and the toil
" ' I ply, nor right nor left my glance hath strayed:—
" ' And, lest thou doubt me, so may Ocean's Lord
" ' Prosper my humble labours, as these eyes
" ' For many an hour since morn upon this strand
" ' Nor man nor woman save myself have seen!'
" The cheated buyer took her tale for truth,
" And turned, and homeward plodded o'er the sands:
" And straight once more a Maid she stood. But soon
" As that capacity of change her Sire
" Knew in his Daughter's form, to many a Lord
" He sold her; and the fraudulent bargain, still
" To mare transformed, to bird, to ox, to deer,
" Her baffled owner fled, and with that gain
" Unrighteous fed her starving Father's need.
" But at the last, all substance spent, all means
" Exhausted, and the fell disease by all
" That should have cured it aggravated more,—
" Ravenous upon himself, for sustenance,
" The Wretch's hunger fastened, and with waste
" Of his own body strove its waste to stay,
" Gnawing his proper limbs!——But wherefore dwell

" On foreign proofs?—I, Princes, I myself
" Have privilege, though limited, to change
" The shape I bear:—sometimes as now your eyes
" Behold me, sometimes in a Serpent's coils
" I twine, or, as the Leader of the herd,
" In a Bull's horn embody all my strength,—
" Horns,—while I could:—but, as yourselves may see,
" One maimèd temple lacks its weapon now!"
He said, and ceased,—and, as he ceased, he groaned.

THE

METAMORPHOSES

OF

PUBLIUS OVIDIUS NASO

BOOK IX.

THE METAMORPHOSES.

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I. But why that groan, and whence that maimèd brow,
Neptunus' Grandson asks. The River-God
Shook sad the rushen garland of his locks
And answered—"'Tis no pleasant tale thy words
"Provoke;—the vanquished little love to tell
"Of fields they won not:—though, with foe like mine,
"The contest's honour overpays its loss,
"And such a Victor robs defeat of shame.
"Haply not stranger to thine ears the name
"Of Deianira, fairest maid, whose love
"Erewhile a thousand rival suitors sought.
"Myself was one;—and frankly to her Sire
"Within his halls I spoke—'Parthaon's Son,
"'Take me for Son-in-law!' Like suit with mine
"Alcides urged, and to us twain the rest
"Their weaker claim resigned. He proffered Jove
"Himself for Sire-in law,—and all the toils
"O'ermastered that his stepdame's hate had set
"Told in his proper praise. But I, a God,

" Too proud to yield to mortal—for not yet
" He too was God—out-spake:—' Thou seest, in me,
" ' The Monarch of the flood whose course oblique
" ' Washes thy shores:—no stranger I, from lands
" ' Or distant or unknown,—of thine own folk
" ' An honoured son,—of thine own realm a part.
" ' Let it not count against me that the Queen
" ' Of Heaven not hates me, and no catalogue
" ' Of toils I reckon by her vengeance set.
" ' And thou, Alcmena's Son!—for in that name
" ' Methinks thou gloriest,—Jove was ne'er thy Sire.
" ' Or but in guilt begot thee, and thy boast
" ' So to be born avows thy Mother's shame!
" ' Choose 'twixt the twain—which wilt thou?—or thy birth
" ' Was base, or all this tale of Jove a lie!'
" Stern, as I spoke, he eyed me, nor the wrath
" That shook him cared to quell:—' My hand'—he said—
" ' Is readier than my tongue:—the victory
" ' Of words I grant thee—that of deeds be mine!'
" And fierce he rushed upon me. Shame it was,
" With those brave words fresh on my lips, to yield:—
" My mantle green I doffed, and, with bent arms
" Before my breast on guard, and every nerve
" Strung for the contest, faced him. But, ere yet
" We grappled, either—he with gathered dust
" And I with yellow sand—his rival strewed.
" Then at my neck, my slippery legs, each limb
" Eager in turn he sprang, and grasped, or seemed
" To grasp, for still I warded off his gripe,
" And, by my bulk defended, baffled him.
" Like some huge rock, against whose steadfast mass

" The roaring flood of Ocean breaks, I stood
" Immovable. Awhile we paused for breath
" And then again we closed:—no thought to yield
" In either now:—and foot to foot, and breast
" To breast, and hand to hand, and brow to brow
" Opposed, we grappled. So two mighty bulls—
" Their prize the fairest heifer of the field—
" Contend, and all the trembling herd looks on,
" Nor knows which victor in the doubtful strife
" Fate destines for its Lord. And thrice in vain
" My fronting breast he laboured from his own
" To hurl:—but with one effort more he loosed
" My locking arms, and—for I nothing hide,—
" Round swung me from him, and with all his weight
" Hung on my back. Believe me,—for I scorn
" To salve my honour with a varnished tale,—
" Seemed it as some vast mountain pressed me down!
" And, hardly as my sweating arms I freed
" A moment from his gripe, and panting stood,
" Ere yet fresh force I gathered, by the neck
" Throttling he seized me, and at last to Earth
" My knee was bent, and prone I bit the dust!
" O'ermastered so in strength, my arts I tried,
" And from his hold,—to serpent-shape transformed,
" Wriggling with many a sinuous fold, and fierce
" With threatening hiss of forky tongue,—I slipped.
" But mocking at the idle wile he laughed!
" ' To strangle serpents was my cradle's task
" ' O Acheloüs! Pass, as well thou may'st,
" ' Thy brother-dragons,—yet, one puny snake,
" ' What art thou, matched with huge Echidna's bulk,

"'That pest of Lerna, from her very wounds
"'Prolific, of whose hundred heads not one
"'Was lopped but straight a pair more terrible
"'Sprang up to heir its place?—Yet her, more strong
"'From every stroke, from every bloody wound
"'Branching with added vipers, overcome
"'I slew!—And hop'st thou, in this borrowed guise,
"'This lying serpent-mask, with arms not thine
"'To brave me?'—As he spoke, behind my head
"I felt his iron gripe:—as in a vice
"Compressed I writhed! One chance was left—to try
"The Bull,—and quick to savage bull transformed
"Once more I dared the strife. But by the neck,
"Where on the left the muscles gave him hold,
"He grasped me—pressed upon me—thrust me down
"Before him, and with giant force my horns
"Strained to the Earth, and rolled me in the dust!
"Nor so content to triumph, from my brow,
"Maimed as ye see it, with his fell right hand
"One horn he tore. My Naiads stole the prize,
"And bade it, consecrate with fruit and flowers,
"For Plenty's ensign serve."—So ceased his tale;
And, as he paused, a River-Nymph, with vest
Like Dian's girt, her locks on either side
Loose o'er her shoulders floating, brought the horn,
Its wealthy hollow with all Autumn filled,
And every fruit that fitliest ends the feast.
So, when the mountain-tops were tinged with morn,
The Heroes went their way, nor bore to wait
Till the spent flood relapsing into peace
Resumed its gentler course. The River-God

His rustic head and mutilated brows
Hid in his waves, by that disfigurement
Sore-vexed, but little harmed; and skilled to hide
With reeds or willow-wreath his forehead's loss.

II. Thou too, ungentle Nessus, passion-fired
For that same Maid, the fatal shaft through back
And breast transfixed had'st felt. His new-won bride
Bearing in triumph homeward, to the banks
Of swift Evenus came the son of Jove,
When, higher than his wont, with winter-storm
Impervious, in fierce torrent rolled the flood.
Him, fearless for himself, but for his wife
Alarmed, the Centaur, strong of limb, and versed
In every ford and shallow of the stream,
Accosted :—"Let me bear the Maiden o'er,
"As well I can, to yonder bank:—thyself
"Art strong enough to swim." And, deadly pale
With terror of the turbulent flood, and scared
At that rough ferryman, the Hero gave
To his strong arms the flower of Calydon;
And, flinging o'er the stream his club and bow,
With but his quiver and his Lion's hide
For burden,—"So! for one more toil!" he cried,—
"A River crowns my labours!" And he plunged,
Careless where less impetuous rolled the flood
To seek his course, and scornful to employ
The current's aid. But, on the further shore
Arrived, and stooping for the bow he flung,
His consort's shriek well-recognised betrayed
Her bearer's purposed treachery:—with his prize

The Centaur fled. "What!" terrible he cried—
"Think'st thou with that vain speed of foot, thou thief
"Of double form, to rob me of mine own?
"Hear'st thou not, Nessus! who it is that bids
"Release her! If nor faith nor fear of me
"Check thee, at least thy Father's whirling wheel
"From lawless lust might warn thee! Think not thou
"With all the speed of all thy hoofs to 'scape!
"My wounds are swifter than my feet!"—The act
Followed the word, and through his flying back
Impelled before his breast the barb out-stood!
And, as he plucked it thence, from either wound
Mingled with Lerna's venom gushed the blood,
And steeped his mantle's fold. "Not unavenged,"
He muttered, "will I perish!" and to her
He would have ravished gave the robe, yet warm
With poisoned gore, and bade her with that gift
At need assure her husband's wavering love.

III. Long time had sped:—the deeds of Hercules,
And Juno's hate, with wonder filled the world.
Triumphant from Œchalia last, his vows
Before the altar of Cenæan Jove
The hero knelt to pay:—when to the ears
Of Deianira Fame, who loves with lies
To garble truth, and, puny-born, augments
Her swelling bulk with every lie she tells,—
The story brought how captive Iole
Her captor held enthralled. The loving wife
Believed the tale, and, maddened at the thought
Of that new rival, broke in passionate grief

Weeping her hapless lot:—but soon she dried
Her eyes, and "Wherefore tears?"—she said—"when tears
"That harlot's heart will gladden?—So! she comes!
"But something yet, ere from my husband's bed
"She thrust me, may be done! What counsel best,
"While yet is time, may serve me?—to complain
"Or hold my peace?—to fly to Calydon
"Or wait and watch?—to quit this hateful house
"Or stay, and bar its gates against my shame,
"If nothing more?—What if a bolder course
"I take, as Meleager's Sister should,
"And show how grief and wrong a woman's hand
"May nerve, and stab the adult'ress to the heart?"
So through a thousand schemes distraught she ran,
And at the last bethought her of that robe
Erst steeped in Nessus' gore, that with its spell
Might wake and win again the truant love.
That seemed it best to send.—To Lichas' hand,
Unknowing what he bore,—unknowing she
What woe she sent,—the fatal charge she gave,
And bade him with all loving message bear
To her good Lord her present:—and her Lord
Unknowing in that mantle, venomous
With all Echidna's poison, clad himself.
So at the marble altar as with rite
Of prayer, of censer, and of bowl, he stood,
That mischief's force within him warmed, and fused
Through all his limbs the melting venom ran.
Long as he could, with wonted fortitude
Silent he bore the torment; but, as pain
O'ermastered patience, from the shrine he fled,

And filled all leafy Œta with his groans,
Striving to rend away the deadly robe
That with it rent the skin, and horribly
Or to his limbs inseparable glued
Refused to part, or, as it parted, bare
From the big bones the quivering muscle tore!
And in that poisonous heat his very blood,
Like white-hot steel in cooling water plunged,
Seethed hissing in his veins;—the greedy fire
Devoured his inmost vitals;—audible snapped
The crackling sinews;—and from every limb
The lurking venom broke in livid sweat,
And sucked the melting marrow from his bones!
To Heaven he spread his hands, and "Look thou down,"
He cried, "from yonder height, Saturnia! feed
"And feast upon my tortures! With this sight
"Of woe, too cruel! glut thy ruthless heart!
"Or, if a foe can pity—for thy foe
"I own me—be thou pitiful, and take
"This too-tormented life, but to thy hate
"Ordained and toil unending from its birth.
"Death were a boon, and such a boon to boot
"As suits a stepdame's giving!—But for this
"On his red altars foul with stranger-blood
"Busiris did I slay? for this upheave
"From strengthening contact with his parent-Earth
"Antæus' bulk?—for this the triple might
"Undaunted of Iberian Geryon dare,
"And drag to light thrice-howling Cerberus?—
"What! my strong hands! did ye that monster Bull
"Hale by the horns subdued? Was't ye whose deeds

" In Elis yet are honoured, by thy waves
" Stymphalus, and in all Parthenia's groves?
" Your valour 'twas that from the Amazon
" Won the wrought girdle of Thermodon's gold,—
" That from the sleepless Dragon's baffled guard
" Hesperia's fruitage reft,—your master-force
" The Centaurs owned, the Boar whose ravage spoiled
" Arcadia's fields, and Hydra still by loss
" The gainer, doubly strong from every wound!
" What! was it I who, with their barbarous lord,
" Those Thracian coursers, fat with human blood,
" Slew, at the rack with mangled corses heaped?
" Who quelled Nemæa's Lion's monstrous strength?
" And Heaven itself upon these shoulders bore,
" Unwearied toiling, till the vengeful Spouse
" Of Jove was weary to invent new toils,
" But by this plague to perish, whose blind force
" Nor sword nor spear nor valour countervails?—
" Alas! within my very heart the fire
" Devouring plays, and feeds on all my limbs!
" And all this while Eurystheus lives and thrives,—
" And fools are found who yet believe in Gods!"—
So all the slopes of Œta, with his pangs
Distraught, the Hero traversed:—Raging so
The tiger, with the arrow in his flank,
The forest ranges, mad to see the foe
That dealt his wound escape. Now with low moan
Of pain, with roar of terrible anguish now,
Now tugging, tearing, at that cursèd vest,
Now from their roots the trees he rent, now fierce
Raved at the guiltless mountains, now subdued

Spread to his Father's Heaven appealing hands.
And now,—to madness wrought by agony,—
Trembling and crouched beneath a jutting rock
Lichas he spied:—"Hah! Thou!" he yelled—"thy hand
"It was that bore this deadly gift! to thee
"I owe this torture!"—And, with terror pale,
And stammering vain excuse, and to his knees
Striving to cling, he seized the boy, and thrice
And once like stone in sling he swung him round,
And whirled him far amid the Eubœan waves!
But, as he flew, he hardened:—and,—as high
In Heaven the rain-shower in the northern blast
Whitens to snow, and in the eddying air
The rounded flake new substance takes and falls
In solid globe compact of icy hail,—
So from those arms tossed headlong through the void,
Bloodless with terror, every vital juice
Dried from his limbs, the tale of earlier times
Asserts him changed to rock.—The Mariner
Knows well a crag that rears above the gulf
Some semblance rude of human form, believed
Yet sensible of hurt, and spares to tread
What once was man, and calls it Lichas still.

IV. But Jove's world-famous son endures no more
Those lingering pangs,—and with the gathered trunks
Of rifled Œta builds a mighty pile
And bids the son of Pæas bring the bow,
The quiver, and the arrows,—destined yet
Once more to gleam before beleaguered Troy,—
And, for last service, light the pyre, and, while

The roaring flames climb greedy round the base,
Above for couch Nemæa's lion-hide
He spreads, and calmly, pillowed on his club,
Down lays him, with such countenance as wears
At festal board some careless banqueter,
'Mid flowing cups reclined, and crowned with flowers.
But now, as high from all the crackling pile
Upshot the flames, and furious licked the limbs
That mocked their fury, terror seized the Gods
For Earth's great champion's peril. Saturn's son
Well-pleased beheld the fear,—and cheering spake.
"I thank ye, Deities! your anxious hearts
"Make glad mine own! your Sovereign and your Sire
"Exults to feel he rules no thankless race,
"And know your loyal love would save his son!
"For him—his deeds were plea enough; but ye
"Bind thus myself your debtor. Cease your fears
"Good hearts and true! All Œta's flames are vain!
"Who conquered all things else shall conquer them!
"The earthlier part his mortal mother gave
"May yield to Vulcan's power,—but what he owes
"To me, immortal, indestructible,
"Defies his force. That—purified from Earth—
"I destine to the Skies, nor doubt to find
"All Heaven applaud the purpose. But if one
"There be who grudges to my son the gift
"Of Deity,—why let him grudge, but know
"The boon well-merited, and in his soul
"Unwilling own it just!" Unanimous
The Gods approved; and, but for those last words,
Whose lurking censure vexed her conscious soul,

Even Juno's self had heard without a frown.
While yet He spoke, whatever fire could burn
Had Mulciber consumed ;—of Hercules
No trace was left ;—all mother-essence lost,
Absorbed,—what yet remained was only Jove's.
And as some serpent casts his wrinkled skin
Rejuvenate, and with new-burnished scales
Delighted basks, so, of those mortal limbs
Untrammelled, all the Hero's nobler part
In nobler shape and loftier stature rose
Renewed, august, majestic, like a God!
Whom, with those four immortal steeds that whirl
His chariot-wheels, the Sire omnipotent
Upbore sublime above the hollow clouds,
And set amid the radiant stars of Heaven.

V. Beneath the added burden Atlas groaned.
But none the less from sire to son transferred
Eurystheus' hate burned rancorous. Iole
Remains to soothe Alcmena's care-worn age:—
To Iole the griefs of querulous eld
She pours, and all the chances of her life,
And all her son's world-famous toils recounts.
Bound by his sire's behest, nor less by love,
Hyllus the maid had wedded. To whom thus
Alcmena,—"Daughter, may the favouring Gods
"Make brief thy throes, when comes to thee the hour
"That fearful mothers dread, and to thy cries
"May Ilythia turn a kindlier ear
"Than gracious Juno let her lend to mine.
"For me, when erst, in that last month of ten,

" My glorious Hercules was ripe for birth,
" My burden's very weight and magnitude
" Bespake the Parent-God. So terrible
" The pangs I bore, that yet to speak of them
" I shudder, and remembrance' self is pain.
" Seven days and nights of agony, outworn
" With torment, to the Heavens my hands I spread
" And with loud cries on the twin Nixi called
" And on Lucina,—and Lucina came,
" But not to help,—fore-won and bribed to glut
" Even with my death relentless Juno's hate.
" There sat she, pitiless of all my moan,
" Where yonder altar flanks the Palace-gate,
" Cross-kneed, with clenching fingers intertwined,
" And hindered me, and with low-murmured chant
" Of spells malignant barred my boy from life.
" So struggling, and with many a vain reproach
" Heaped on ungrateful Jove, I lay, and longed
" To die, and made such plaint as might have moved
" The flinty rocks to pity. By my couch
" The Theban matrons stood with aiding prayers
" And vows, and strove to cheer me in my pains.
" A maid there was about me, flaxen-haired,
" Galanthis called, an honest burgher's child,
" Quick at all hests and for that quickness loved.
" First to suspect that whatsoe'er it was
" That thwarted me was jealous Juno's work,
" She, as she went and came, before the gate,
" Observed the Goddess by the altar crouched,
" With tremulous hands clenched o'er her crossing knees,
" And 'Whosoe'er thou art,' she cried, 'Rejoice!

" 'The Gods have eased Alcmena of her pains,
" 'And made her Mother of a gallant boy!'
" Upsprang the Goddess terrified, and wide
" Flung her unknitted hands:—the binding spell
" Was loosed, and I was lighter of my son.

VI. " Loud laughed Galanthis at the lucky cheat:—
" But, 'mid her laughing, by those yellow locks
" The wrathful Goddess seized and flung her down;
" And, as to rise she struggled, dwarfed in size
" She shrank, with arching back, her dwindled arms
" To fore-legs changed. Quick is she still as erst,
" And on her back the hair is yellow yet;
" But bestial, reft of all her human shape:—
" And as her mouth it was whose happy lie
" My labour lightened, by the mouth her young
" She bears, and still she haunts the house she served."

VII. She said, and of her ancient servitress
Sad thinking sighed. But, pensive as she ceased,
Spake Iole—" O Mother, if the change
" So move thee of a stranger to thy blood,
" What if I tell,—though never without tears
" My faltering tongue attempts the broken tale,—
" My sister's wondrous fate?—No other child
" Her Mother had save Dryope—(myself
" Was from a second bed)—the fairest far
" Confessed of all Œchalia's maids. The God
" Of Delphos and of Delos first had reft
" By force her virgin-flower; but for his wife
" Andræmon after took the outraged maid,

" And all men held him happy in his choice.
" A Lake there is, from whose low marge the banks
" Slope upward to a ridge with myrtles crowned.
" There, ignorant of the Fates, came Dryope
" With gifts—whose guerdon shame it is to tell—
" Of garlands for the Nymphs; and at her breast
" Her babe, scarce yet a twelvemonth old, she bore,
" The pleasing burden suckling as she went.
" Just ere the lake a purple lotos-bed
" With plenteous promise bloomed of berried fruit:—
" And Dryope, to please her infant, culled
" A flower, and I, who held her company,
" The like had done,—but from the severed stalk
" Oozed crimson drops of blood, and all the leaves
" With tremulous horror rustled. And, too late,
" The rustics told how Naiad Lotis, erst
" From lewd Priapus flying, to that flower
" Transformed her nature changed but kept her name.

VIII. " Could Dryope have known it?—Terrified,
" With hasty homage to the Nymphs, she turned
" To fly:—her feet clung rooted to the ground,
" And, struggle as she might, her upper part
" Was all she moved. The hardening bark below
" Closed round her, spreading, growing, till her form
" To half its height was veiled. And as she felt
" Her fate, and strove to rend her hair, her hands
" With leaves were filled—her locks were only leaves!
" Her boy, Amphisus,—(so his grandsire's will
" Had named him,)—hardening felt the breast he sought,
" And the sweet fount of Nature's nurture dried.

" And I, spectatress of that cruel fate,
" Was impotent to help! With vain embrace
" And clasp, 'twas all I could, I strove to stay
" The barky branching growth, or bade the Gods
" Unite me with her in that living tomb.
" Fast hurry there her spouse, her wretched Sire,
" And ask for Dryope:—for Dryope
" I shew a Lotos! And the wood, yet warm,
" They kiss, and cling around the kindred trunk.
" Alas! my Sister! naught was left thee now,
" Save face, that was not tree! But welling yet
" Thy tears bedewed the leaves that late were limbs,
" And, while thy voice had way, thy piteous wail
" Rang through the air—'Oh! if the wretched yet
" 'May challenge credence, not deserved this wrong
" 'I bear—no guilt of mine this doom hath earned!
" 'My life was blameless! If I speak not truth
" 'Be blasted all these leaves I bear, and axe
" 'And fire consume me! From these branching arms
" 'Take, take my babe! Let some kind nurse's breast
" 'Receive him:—bring him hither,—in my shade
" 'Still let him sport,—beneath these boughs imbibe
" 'His infant nurture,—and, when first his tongue
" 'Can frame the words, bid him in me salute
" 'His parent,—teach his little lips to say,
" 'Alas! my Mother in this trunk lies hid!
" 'But warn him shun the lakes, and dread to pluck
" 'The flowers, and fear a Goddess in each bud.
" 'And thou, my Husband dear, and thou, my Sire,
" 'Farewell! and thou, my Sister!—But if yet
" 'Ye love me, guard from edge of biting axe,

" ' Or tooth of gnawing flocks, these leaves of mine!
" ' And, for I cannot bend my face to yours,
" ' Raise yours to mine, and kiss me! give my lips
" ' To press my babe's, while lips are mine to press!
" ' Ah! hardly can I speak! I feel the bark
" ' Round my white throat close choking! o'er my head
" ' It rises! Take away your hands! the rind
" ' Their pious office spares ye, and seals up
" ' My dying eyes!'—Then ceased her lips at once
" To speak, and be:—but long the new-born boughs
" Retained the warmth of that transmuted form."

IX. So of her Sister's piteous fate the tale
Told Iole, and from her eyes the tears,
Weeping herself, Alcmena dried:—when lo!
A sudden sight of marvel stayed their grief.
Upon the threshold Iolaus stood,
Once more almost a boy:—upon his chin
The down was new; and, as in years long gone,
Glowed in his cheeks the hue of youth restored.

X. Such boon, conceded to her husband's prayers,
Had Hebe given:—but, ere her lips could frame
Their purposed oath to grant such boon no more,
Great Themis interposed. "Even now"—she said—
" Wild war round Thebes is raging:—Capaneus
" Demands no meaner Victor than Jove's self!
" In fratricidal strife the Brothers fall!
" The Seer yet living through the yawning Earth
" Sinks to the Shades! Parent for parent slain
" Makes pious vengeance impious in his Son!

" Maddened, an exile both from sense and home,
" He wanders, hunted by the haggard troop
" Of Furies and his Mother's haunting ghost,
" Till to his consort's prayers the fatal boon
" Of that gold necklet promised to the swords
" Of Phegeus' sons betray their kinsman's life.
" Then Acheloïs' child, Callirrhoë,
" A suppliant for her sons to highest Jove
" Shall kneel, and Jove, by her entreaties won,
" Demand this service at his step-child's hands,
" And ere due season make her infants men!"

XI. So, knowing what should come, with prophet-rede
Spake Themis, and among the listening Gods
Woke various murmur:—"Wherefore should not all
" Such boon alike have privilege to grant?"—
Aurora mourns Tithonus' helpless age:—
Mild Ceres pleads Iasion's whitened brows:—
For Ericthonius Mulciber demands
A second life:—and Venus, provident
To friend the future fortunes of her race,
For old Anchises claims a youth renewed.
No God but for some favourite had his suit,
And suit to clamour swelled. But stern the voice
Of Sovereign Jove out-spake—" What madness this
" That stirs ye? Whither hath all reverence fled?—
" Dares one among ye hope to turn the Fates?—
" The Fates—not I—to Iolaus gave
" His doubled life:—The Fates, unmoved by prayer
" Or force, make men Callirrhoë's infant sons!
" You and—(so better learn ye to submit!—)

"Me too the Fates constrain. Could I control
"Their will,—would Æacus be bowed with age?—
"Would Rhadamanthus lack perpetual flower
"Of youth?—or he, my Minos, who, despised
"For bitter burden of enfeebling years,
"Less firmly holds a factious realm in awe?"
The Gods were hushed:—What right had any there
To murmur, if not Jove from weary age
Could rescue Rhadamanthus, Æacus,
And Minos?—Minos, who in manhood's prime
Shook all the world with terror of his name,
But feeble now, and for his throne alarmed
Lest proud Miletus, insolent with youth
And birth from Phœbus, let rebellion loose
And challenge it; nor strong enough to dare
The dreaded traitor banish. Self-exiled
Miletus, fled'st thou, o'er the Ægean wave
To Asia borne by rapid sails, to build
The stately City by thy name renowned.
In that new realm it was, thine eyes beheld,—
Wandering beside Mæander's banks, whose wave
With refluent winding seeks its parent fount,—
Cyaneë, fairest daughter of the stream,
And loved her:—and, to thy embraces won,
Caunus and Byblis were the twins she bore.
Byblis—to Maidens of unlawful love
Sad warning! Byblis by a brother's charms
Alas! to more than Sister's fondness fired!
Yet at the first unconscious of her flame,
Nor thinking harm to clasp a Brother's neck
Or press with kiss on kiss a Brother's lips

Where treacherous Nature sanctioned the caress.
So Love indulged swerves gradual into Lust.
Goes she to meet him?—With all grace of art
Her charms are decked,—she cannot seem too fair:—
And, if there be a fairer than herself,
That fairer maid she hates. Nor yet her aim
Even to herself is manifest:—the fire
Glows hot within, but yet she breathes no vow.
"Caunus"—she calls him,—never "Brother" says:—
Would *he* would "Byblis," and not "Sister," say!
Nor dares she to herself the unhallowed wish
Own in her waking hours:—but in her dreams
She sees the form she covets; breast to breast
She clasps him close, and blushes in her sleep:—
Then wakes, and silent long recalls the bliss
Of slumber, till her spirit's trouble shapes
Itself to words:—"Ah! wretched me! What mean
"These dreams which yet I dare not wish fulfilled?
"Why must such visions haunt me? Fair he is!
"That even his foes must own—and lovable,—
"Whom, were he not my Brother, I myself
"Might love unblamed, well worthy of my love.
"But this curst tie forbids!—Ah! if the Day
"Denies the hope that waking dares not own,
"Come Night again and bring me back my dreams!
"Dreams that no spy can witness! dreams of Heaven!
"Soft Queen of Love, and Thou, her wingèd Son!
"What visionary transport! Soul and sense
"What rapture thrilled! The very memory
"Is ecstasy! Though all too brief the joy
"And hurrying Night sped envious of my bliss!

"Could we but change our names, and so be wed,
"How gladly, Caunus, could I call thy sire
"My Sire-in-law! how gladly mine might hail
"A Son-in-law in thee! I would to Heaven
"All things were common to us save our blood,
"And I a peasant's child, and thou a King's!
"Ah me! the children of some happy wife
"Shall call thee Father, while to me, whom Fate
"Hath linked with thee in common parentage,
"Thou canst be naught but Brother! *We* can have
"But the one tie that parts us!—What then mean
"These dreams of mine? Why, what mean any dreams?
"And yet, *can* dreams have meaning? Gods forgive
"The thought!—And yet the Gods their Sisters loved:—
"In spite of blood Saturn with Ops was wed,—
"Oceanus with Tethys,—Jove's geat self
"With Juno. Ah! but Gods have other laws
"Than we, and mortals may not dare affect
"The higher broader privilege of Heaven.
"Away then with this passion from my breast!
"Or, if I fail to quell it, let me die,
"And Caunus weeping bend above my bier,
"And on my cold corse print a guiltless kiss!—
"What if I let it burn? Ah! Love demands
"Consenting hearts! I love him, but my love
"To him will seem pollution!—Yet of old
"The Æolidæ not shunned a Sister's bed.
"How know I this?—Why cite it?—Whither thus
"Does passion whirl me?—Down! unholy flames!
"And let me love but as a Sister should!
"And yet, if Caunus had but loved me first,

"Could he have asked me aught I would not grant?—
"Must I then seek what, had myself been sought
"I sure had given the seeker? Dare I speak?—
"Dare I avow me?—Love is strong! I dare!
"Or, if shame lock my lips, my pen can paint
"The hidden fire that preys upon my soul!"
That plan seems best to her distracted mind:
And half she rises on her couch to write.
"Yes! come what will, he learns it! thus I own
"This frantic passion! Yet in what a gulf
"Alas! I plunge! What madness fires my soul!"
Then, trembling all, she sets herself to frame
The meditated words:—her right hand holds
The style, her left the tablet's virgin-page:—
Begins, then hesitates;—begins anew;—
Effaces what she wrote, and writes, and blots
And writes again, and alters;—all too warm
Is this, and that too frigid:—now she flings
The tablets from her,—now resumes the task:—
What she *would* say, she cannot; what she says
Seems still amiss: and, at each word she writes,
Boldness with shame holds conflict on her cheeks.
"Caunus, thy Sister"—No! that word must out!
The very wax refuses it!—"the Maid
"Who loves thee, Caunus, all that bliss for thee
"Invokes, which, if thou grant her not her hopes,
"Herself can never know. Alas! she shames
"To write the name she bears:—and, for her suit,
"Would Heaven that nameless she that suit could plead,
"Nor Byblis, till she won it, stand confessed!
"Yet ah! methinks this passion-wasted cheek

" Paling and flushing, these too eloquent eyes
" Brimming with frequent tears, the sigh that lacked
" Apparent cause, the oft-repeated clasp
" Of these fond arms, might well ere this have told
" The secret of my heart! Thou might'st have felt
" A something more than Sister in my kiss!
" Yet, deep as rankled in my soul the wound,
" Fierce as the fire within me burned, the Gods
" Be witness to me, how I combated
" This madness, how I strove to wrench this dart
" Of Cupid from my bosom! how endured
" Such struggle as thou scarce could'st deem a Maid
" Were capable to bear!—'Tis lost, and I
" Confess me vanquished! At thy feet I lay
" My trembling suit! To thee alone for life
" Or death she looks who loves thee :—give her then
" Which doom thou wilt!—No enemy it is
" Who sues thee—close as is the link that joins
" Us twain, her wish would make it closer yet,
" And with Love's tie bind stronger that of blood!
" Leave laws to gray-beards! Such may gloze and fix
" What these deny or warrant :—for the young
" Like us more liberal Venus legislates!
" Ask we not what is sanctioned—rather think
" Nothing unsanctioned, following the great Gods
" Whose loves have set us pattern for our own.
" No father's frown—no dread of slanderous tongues—
" No fear need check us :—What have we to fear
" Whose Kindred's self secures our furtive joys?
" Alone, unblamed, together may we talk,—
" Unblamed in all men's sight embrace and kiss,—

" How little lacks our bliss to be complete!
" Ah! pity thou the love I own, nor yet
" Had owned, but that the fire within my soul
" Outflames disguise,—nor bear to see thy name
" Writ on my tomb, my death's too cruel cause!"
So with her fruitless prayers the waxen page
Was lettered to its marge. Her tears supplied
The moisture that her fevered tongue refused,
For temper of the guilty missive's seal,
Stamped with her signet. Then she called a Page
And, blushing, with such gracious tones as make
Command seem favour, to the bashful boy
His errand gave. " This to "—and there she paused,
And then at length—" This to my Brother bear!
" Fail not as well I trust thee!" And, as forth
She held the tablets, from her hands they dropped!
The omen scared her, but she sent them still:
And, in due time and place, to Caunus' hand
The unwitting Envoy gave his secret charge.
Not all—too much—he read:—fierce from his eye
Flashed angry lightning,—furious down he dashed
The tablets,—scarce his lifted hand refrained
To smite the bearer dead. " Begone!"—he cried—
" While yet thou may'st, foul Pandar to a lust
" Accurst, who here, did not thy death involve
" The honour of my house, with thy vile life
" Should'st pay thine errand:—hence!"—The trembling boy
Back with those terrible words to Byblis fled.
That was her answer! Marble-pale she heard,—
Her very heart was frozen;—stupefied
She stood:—yet still, as gradual sense returned

Returned unconquered passion, and in words
Scarce audible she murmured—"Ay! 'tis just!
"I might have looked for this! What madness was't
"That made me thus lay bare my bosom's wound?
"What folly trusted that too hasty wax
"With premature avowal?—Better far
"First had I with ambiguous speech essayed
"To sound his soul:—More wisely had I watched
"The skies, and marked what quarter waked the breeze
"Auspicious to my venture, riding so
"Safe on the open Sea, nor spread my sails
"Incautious to the untried winds of Heaven.
"So strike I on the rocks! All Ocean whelms
"My bark that founders hopeless of return!
"Could I not read the omen that forbade
"This fatal passion, when my trembling hands
"Those tablets dropped? I might have known my hope
"Was doomed to fail! Why could I not have changed
"The day?—the day? Why not the whole design?
"'Twas Heaven itself that warned me! Was I mad
"To spurn its warning?—Or why not myself
"Have spoken? Why upon that frigid wax
"Pour out my soul? Why write? When face to face
"He should have heard me plead, have seen my tears,
"And in my burning blushes read my love?
"I could have said far more than tablets can!
"I could have clung round his unwilling neck,
"Have grovelled at his feet, have begged, implored
"For very life, and, if he heard me not,
"Have died there suppliant! Ay, a thousand things
"I might have done, whereof if this or that

" Had failed to move his flinty heart, yet all
" Together sure had won him to my suit!—
" Yet haply 'twas my faulty envoy failed
" To see the fitting time,—broke on an hour
" Ill-chosen, busied with affairs of state,—
" And so my cause must suffer! Ay! 'twas this
" That foils me! Caunus is not tiger-bred,—
" His heart is not of iron or of rock,—
" No Lioness it was that suckled him,—
" He must, he shall, be won! I quit not so
" The chase! Unwearied will I follow it,
" While breath remains to follow. Best it were,
" I grant,—so could I but recall the past,—
" Ne'er to have roused this quarry, but next best
" To hunt it to the death. Say, for the nonce
" He spurns my prayers, yet sure my earnestness,
" The very daring of my dauntless love,
" Must touch him in the end!—Should I desist,
" 'Twill seem but some light fancy of the hour,—
" Perchance some snare devised but to betray,—
" Or surely, not by that great God, whose fires
" Have ever burned and still must burn mankind,
" Will he believe me conquered, but by lust!—
" And, last,—for me what yet of crime remains?
" Have I not written,—not avowed my love,—
" Not steeped my soul in sin?—If never more
" I uttered word, my claim to innocence
" Is forfeit from this hour! Much yet is left
" To hope, but ah! no greater guilt to fear!"
So passion warred in her divided mind
With reason:—what she would she ne'er had tried

Yet obstinate to try; and unabashed
Still with fresh suit encountering fresh repulse.
Till, at the last, from that persistent shame,
From home, self-exiled, Caunus fled, to build
On foreign shores the town that bears his name.
Then from the hapless wretch, forsaken so,
Fled all control of reason:—wild she tore
Her robe, and frantic beat upon her breast,
And, manifestly mad, to all men's ears
Proclaimed her guilty passion; and, her home
And all her household Gods, too hateful now,
Deserting, Caunus' flying track pursued,
Yelling and shrieking,—(so the matrons say
Of Bubasus, who heard her,)—as when wrought
To frenzy by the thyrsus, at the rites
Triennial of the Son of Semele,
Yelling and shrieking howl the dames of Thrace!
Past these, and past the warrior-Leleges,
Caria she roamed and Lycia,—by the walls
Of Lymira by Cragus over-topped,
O'er Xanthus' stream, and where Chimæra glows
Pregnant with central fire, a lioness
Above, a snake below. And now the woods
Were traversed, and o'erworn with vain pursuit
Upon the plain she sank, her locks on Earth
Dank trailing, and her lips, too weak for speech,
Pressed to a heap of Autumn's drifted leaves.
Her frequent there the Lelegeïan Nymphs
With tender arms would raise, beseech her quell
That fatal passion, soothe, console;—'twas vain!
She would not hear, or answer. Mute she lay,

With restless fingers plucking at the grass,
And watering all the herbage with her tears.
To these, they say, the pitying Nymphs supplied—
What could they more?—a never-failing fount
Whence still,—as from the wounded pine exudes
Its resinous blood, as some bituminous spring
Incessant bubbles, as the wintry ice
That binds the brook, when warm Favonius breathes,
Dissolving trickles in the vernal Sun,—
They flowed, till all the Maid in her own tears
Was melted to a fountain! Still beneath
The ilex-grove that shades that Carian vale
It flows, and bears unhappy Byblis' name.

XII. Through all the hundred towns of Crete the tale
Had moved more marvel, but that Crete was then
Engrossed with newer wonders of her own.
In Phæstia,—close upon the Gnossian bounds,—
Of low but honest birth, and known to few,
Dwelt Lygdus, frugal, with such scant estate
As matched his birth, respected for a life
Of blameless rectitude. His consort's hour
Of travail was at hand. "Two things"—he said—
"I pray for,—first, for thee an easy time,
"And next, for both, a boy!—These chits of girls,
"Too weak to earn their living, are but plagues
"And burdens. Should the babe thou bear'st, (which Fate
"Forefend,) be female, sorrowing though I speak
"Her sentence, Heaven forgive me!—but she dies!"
Weeping he spoke whose will was law, and she
Whose duty was obedience weeping heard,

And long and earnestly, with fruitless prayers
Besought him leave to wiser Nature's choice
Unfettered freedom. But the man was fixed,
Immovable. And now she scarce sustained
Her waxing burden's weight; when by her couch
At midnight, 'mid a band of kindred Gods,
Great Isis stood, or seemed to stand, her brows
Horned like the moon, and chapleted with wreath
Of harvest-golden ears, in majesty
Divine of port:—Anubis, dog-faced God,
Beside her,—and Bubastis,—and the Bull
Apis of dappled hue,—and He who lays
A silence-warning finger on his lips,—
And great Osiris, ever sought anew
With sistral clangour,—and the Snake of Nile
That painless poisons with narcotic death.
Sudden aroused from slumber, manifest
She saw and heard the Goddess—"Be of cheer,
"My Telethusa, lay aside thy cares,
"True votary," she said, "nor hesitate
"To balk thy lord's commands, and, when thy load
"Lucina lightens, save whate'er the Gods
"Shall send thee. Helpful am I;—whoso prays
"My aid prays ne'er in vain. Thou hast not served
"A thankless Power!"—She spake, and disappeared.
Rejoicing Telethusa rose, and spread
Her hands to Heaven, and prayed her dreams come true.
And now her pains laid hold on her,—the weight
She bore within her forced its way to life,—
And to the cheated sire a girl was born
Proclaimed a boy, and for a boy believed.

The nurse alone the secret knew and kept:—
The Father thanked his Gods, and bade the babe
Iphis be called, as erst his grandsire was;
And the pleased mother hailed the lucky name
That fitted either sex, and told no lie.
So unsuspected long the pious fraud
Lay hidden:—as a boy the child was trained,
Fair with such doubtful grace, as either sex
Might wear, and pass for comeliest of its kind.
Ten years and three rolled by:—and Lygdus pledged
His Iphis' hand to old Telestes' child,
The golden-haired Ianthe, richest far
Of Phæstia's maids in dower of loveliness.
Well matched in age and beauty were the pair;—
Together bred, together taught what schools
And masters teach,—in either artless breast
Nature had kindled love; in either burned
An equal flame, but ah! no equal hope!
Impatient one would speed the happy day
That makes the seeming youth she loves her own:—
One, not less loving, but despairs to know
The bliss she covets hopeless:—fiercer burns
The flame, that, in a maiden for a maid,
It burns in vain. "Alas!" she cries, and scarce
The starting tears represses,—"What but woe
"Have I to look for,—I whose hapless breast
"Too cruel Venus with this passion fires,
"Strange, unexampled, monstrous! Had the Gods
"Been pitiful—the Gods who spared me erst
"But to destroy me now—they might have found
"Methinks, some commoner wonted ill, some plague

" Of less unnatural sting, to vex me with!
" Love fires not cow for cow, or mare for mare,
" Or ewe for ewe;—the doe pursues the buck;—
" No bird of air, no thing that breathes, endures
" Female to mate with female:—would to Heaven
" That I no woman were, or else were dead!
" Hath not our Crete borne prodigies enough
" Of monstrous love?—The daughter of the Sun
" Was of a bull enamoured,—yet no law
" Of sex, so loving, broke,—so less insane
" In aim, at least, than I! Her cunning served
" Her passion well, and in the seeming Cow
" Might well delude her witless paramour!
" But I!—though all the craft of all the world
" Were here at will, though Dædalus himself
" Could hither backward ply his waxen wings,—
" What boot were all to me? Could art transform
" Me to a boy, or make Ianthe man?
" Bethink thee, Iphis! be of firmer soul,
" And quench this hopeless flame that fires thy breast!
" Accept what Nature made thee, nor deceive
" Thyself as others:—seek what may be sought,
" And learn to love but as a woman should.
" 'Tis hope that wakes, 'tis hope that nurtures love,
" And hope is not for thee!—No guardian's watch
" No jealous spouse, no churlish sire denies
" Ianthe to thine arms:—herself is fain
" Thine asking to forestall:—and never yet
" Canst thou possess her! Though all circumstance,
" All men, all Gods, conspire thy happiness,
" Thus canst thou ne'er be happy! Every vow

" That heart can form, save one, is granted me:—
" The favouring Heavens have given me all they can:—
" Love answers love, and sire consents with sire:—
" And envious Nature, mightier far than all,
" Alone my foe, forbids! The happy day,
" For so they deem it, is at hand that makes
" Ianthe mine:—mine?—never to be mine!
" Amid surrounding waves we die of thirst!
" And how should Juno, how should Hymen, come
" With spousal blessing to such mocking rites
" As lack a groom, and link but bride with bride?"
So spake she:—and, the while, with equal fires
Ianthe burned, and chid the lingering hours
That stayed the bridal morn. Nor such delay
Was lacked as Telethusa's fears could find:—
Sick was she now,—now dreamed a dream,—now saw
Some evil-boding omen:—but the time
Wore on, no pretext more was left; one day
Alone remained. Before the altar knelt
The mother and her child, their flowing locks
Dishevelled from the fillet's zone unbound:—
And earnest, clasping with her arms the shrine,
Prayed Telethusa—" Hear me, Isis! Queen
" Supreme in Parætonium, by the shores
" Of Mareotis' lake and Pharos' isle.
" And where old Nilus seven-fold rolls his flood!
" In pity hear, and aid! My soul is racked
" With fears! Thee, Goddess! Thee it was I saw!
" Thine ensigns, and thy train, thy torch's blaze,
" Thy sistrum's clang,—I recognised them all,
" And knew Thee, and obeyed Thee!—'Tis by Thee,

"Thy counsel, thy command, that Iphis looks
"Yet on the light,—that I myself escape
"Unpunished! Pity, help, and save us both!"
Weeping she prayed: and, as by pity touched,
The very altar seemed, and more than seemed,
To tremble, and the Temple's shaken gates
Rattled assent:—the Goddess' moonèd brows
Flashed radiance, and untouched the sistrum clanged.
Hopeful, not yet secure, the Mother turned
And left the shrine:—and Iphis followed her
With longer, firmer stride,—a cheek that glowed
More ruddy than its wont,—an added power
Of limb and frame,—a bolder glance of eye,—
A shorter crisper curl of hair,—a sense
Of vigour more than woman's.—Thou who wert
A Woman, art a Man! With thankful gifts
Heap ye the shrines! Rejoice! nor doubt the Gods!
With thankful gifts the shrines they heap, and fix,
Beside, a tablet, with this legend graved,
"These to the Gods did Iphis vow, a Maid:—
"These to the Gods did Iphis pay, a Man."
And now the morrow-morn unveiled the world,
And Venus came, and Juno, and the God
Of wedlock with his torch, and, in all bliss,
A lusty bridegroom clasped a blooming bride.

THE

METAMORPHOSES

OF

PUBLIUS OVIDIUS NASO

BOOK X.

THE METAMORPHOSES.

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I. Thence saffron-robed aloft through boundless air
Flew Hymenæus, to Ciconian Thrace
By Orpheus summoned in no happy hour.
So called, he came:—but with no customed word
Of blessing,—no propitious sign,—no smile,—
And waving but a dismal torch, that hissed
Dark-smoking, flameless, ominous of woe
Too soon to come, too heavy. As the bride
New-wedded, with a band of Naiads girt,
Along the meads was sporting, in the heel
A serpent bit her, and the bite was Death!
Long with the Thracian's wail the upper airs
Of Rhodope rang vocal:—desperate then
Appealing to the very Shades, he dared
The dark Tænarian gorge that leads to Styx
To tread, and through the unsubstantial realm,
Populous with phantom-ghosts of buried men,
Undaunted passed, to where Persephone
Sits by the Monarch of that cheerless folk

Of Shadows throned,—and struck his lyre, and sang.
" Gods of the nether world, whereto we all
" Of mortal birth descend,—if simple truth
" And plain unvarnished tale your grace may win,—
" No curious traveller to the darksome realms
" Of Tartarus, I:—no bold adventurer
" With chain or collar for the triple neck
" Of fell Medusa's serpent-shaggy whelp:—
" My bride it is I seek, whose ripening years
" A venomous serpent blighted. How I strove
" To bear her loss ye know, and know I strove
" In vain! Love mastered Patience! Love, a God
" Omnipotent above, but if below
" I know not, though, methinks, not here unknown:—
" For, if Fame lies not of that ancient rape,
" 'Twas Love that linked yourselves!—By this abode
" Of Terrors,—by black Chaos' awful void,—
" By all the vast and silent world ye sway,—
" Hear me! and pitying bid the Fates re-weave
" For my Eurydice the thread of life
" Too early snapped!—To you we all are owed:—
" And be it soon or late, one common seat
" Awaits our race:—Hither we all are bound;—
" Here find our latest home. Alone of Gods
" Ye boast eternal empire o'er Mankind!
" Herself, when years renewed their juster term
" Attain, will still be yours. I ask but use,
" But loan, of what ere long I must restore,—
" Which if the Fates refuse me, let them keep
" Me too, and triumph in the doom of both!"
So sang he, and, accordant to his plaint,

As wailed the strings, the bloodless Ghosts were moved
To weeping. By the lips of Tantalus
Unheeded slipped the wave;—Ixion's wheel
Forgot to whirl;—the Vulture's bloody feast
Was stayed;—awhile the Belides forbore
Their leaky urns to dip;—and Sisyphus
Sate listening on his stone. Then first, they say,—
The iron cheeks of the Eumenides
Were wet with pity. Of the nether realm
Nor King nor Queen had heart to say him nay.
Forth from a host of new-descended Shades
Eurydice was called; and, halting yet
Slow with her recent wound she came—alive
On one condition to her Spouse restored,
That, till Avernus' vale is passed and Earth
Regained, he look not backward, or the boon
Is null and forfeit. Through the silent realm
Upward against the steep and fronting hill
Dark with obscurest gloom, the way he led:
And now the upper air was all but won,
When, fearful lest the toil o'ertask her strength,
And yearning to behold the form he loved,
An instant back he looked,—and back the Shade
That instant fled! The arms that wildly strove
To clasp and stay her clasped but yielding air!
No word of plaint even in that second Death
Against her Lord she uttered,—how could Love
Too anxious be upbraided?—but one last
And sad "Farewell," scarce audible, she sighed,
And vanished to the Ghosts that late she left.
Aghast, astounded, at that double death

Stood Orpheus :—not more stunned the wretch who saw,
Dragged fettered by his midmost neck of three,
The hound of Hell, and, as he gazed, of fear
And life at once delivered, turned to stone :—
Not Olenus when, self-accused, he claimed
Lethæa's guilt and blame,—nor she his spouse
Whose arrogance of beauty dared to vie
With Goddesses, more stupefied,—when changed
To neighbour-rocks on Ida's dewy slopes
They stood, in death united as in life.
Deaf to all prayer, the Ferryman of Hell
No more allowed him passage. Seven long days,—
Grief for his meat and weeping for his drink,
Else nurtureless,—upon the bank he lay,
Haggard and squalid :—then he rose, and cursed
The inexorable Gods of Erebus,
And, hopeless, to the snows of Rhodope
And wind-swept Hæmus took his lonely way.
Thrice in the watery Pisces' sign the Sun
Had closed the circling year, and still he shunned
The face of woman, loveless ;—or deterred
By that first wedlock's hapless end, or bound
By vow to her he lost ;—though many a maid
The magic of his music moved to love,
And many a longing maiden loved in vain.
Nor wifeless only lived he, but, if Fame
Not wrong him, taught the Thracian youth to spurn
The charms of womankind, and desecrate
The Love-God's altar with unhallowed fires.

II. A hill there was, upon whose level top

The verdant turf spread shadeless. There his seat
The God-born minstrel took, and struck his lyre,
And lo! the spot was cool with sudden shade,
And all the forest clomb to hear the song!
Chaonia's oak was there,—the sister-grove
Of Heliad Poplars,—tallest Esculus,—
The velvet-leafy Lime,—the fragile wand
Of Hazel,—and the Cornel good for shaft
Of warrior's spear,—the knotless Silver-Fir,—
The Ilex with its load of acorns bowed,—
The Plane of revellers loved,—the Maple grained
With various hues,—Willows that haunt the stream,—
And lake-born Lotos,—ever-verdant Box,—
Slim Tamarisk,—and the Myrtle's double green,—
And Laurustinus' purple-berried boughs.
The Ivy trailed its sinuous growth,—the Vine
With fondling tendrils clasped the listening Elm.
Came Mountain-Ash,—came Pitch-tree,—Arbutus
A-flame with crimson-fruitage,—and the Palm
With flexile chaplet circling victor-brows,—
And Pine, whose shaggy matted crown o'ertops
A leafless trunk,—still for the form it shrouds
Of Atys, whilome changed from man to tree,
Dear to the mighty Mother of the Gods.

III. 'Mid these, like some tall column's shaft that marks
The racer's goal, the Cypress stood; a tree
To-day, a youth of yore, and of the God
Beloved who strings the lyre and strings the bow,
Master in both. Along Carthæa's meads
There pastured, sacred to the local Nymphs,

A stately stag,—his head with ample shade
Of branching horns o'ershadowed, luminous
Themselves with gold;—a jewelled collar's fringe
Round his slim neck and down his shoulders hung;
On his mid forehead, as he moved, a boss
Of silver by a slender fillet swung
Sustained, and bright beside his arching brows
From either ear twin brazen pendants played.
Free from all fears that shake his kind, the haunts
Of men he loved, and even to hands unknown
His fondling neck would proffer for caress.
But most to Cyparissus dear, the flower
Of Cæa's youth:—'twas Cyparissus led
To freshest pasture and to clearest spring;
'Twas Cyparissus wreathed his horns with flowers,
Or, mounted on his back, here, there, at will,
Guided with purple rein his willing steed.
A summer-morn it was, and fierce the Sun
In Cancer blazed. Upon a grassy bank
Cool with obscuring boughs, the panting stag
Had laid him, when from Cyparissus' bow,
Unknowing what he shot at, sped a shaft
And pierced him:—and, as from the fatal wound
The life-blood gushed, in passionate grief the boy
Beside his dying favourite swore to die!
No word of tender solace unessayed
Left Phœbus,—no remonstrance spared with grief
Too heavy for such chance:—the boy wept on,
And called the Gods to grant him one last boon,
And let him weep for ever!—So his blood
Perpetual sorrow drained;—his pallid limbs

Gradual a deepening green o'erspread; the locks
But now soft waving round a marble brow
Rose rough and horrent, and in slender spire
Of matted verdure pointed to the skies.
" Farewell then!" said the sighing God—" by me
" Still be thou mourned, and still for others mourn,
" And evermore companion be of woe!"

IV. So round the Bard each tree of all the grove
And every beast of earth and bird of air
In listening ring were gathered :—And, as touched
Prelusive, every string of various tone
Accordant answered, thus the song began.
" Muse, Mother mine, with Jove, great Lord of all,
" Inaugurate my lay!—The might of Jove
" Ere now not seldom have I sung :—'twas I
" That hymned his triumph o'er the Giant brood
" On Phlegra blasted by the bolts of Heaven.
" Be lighter now my strain:—what youthful charms
" Have warmed the Gods,—the meed of lawless fires
" What guilty maids have earned,—be these my theme.
" Jove's sovereign self, of Phrygian Ganymede
" Enamoured, found a shape that for the nonce
" More pleased him than his own, and in the form—
" No meaner—of the bird that bears his bolts,
" A seeming-Eagle swooped, and bore aloft
" The boy to Heaven; where still, in Juno's spite,
" 'Tis his with nectar, when the Immortals feast,
" The bowl to crown, and hand the draught to Jove.

V. " Thee, too, Amyclas' child, like place in Heaven—

" (But that the Fates too hurrying balked the gift—)
" Had Phœbus given,—eternal yet, as far
" As God could make thee:—oft as Winter yields
" To Spring, and from the watery Fish the Ram
" Receives the Sun, so oft in delicate flower
" From the green turf thou risest, born anew.
" Thee above all my Father loved! For thee
" Did central Delphi lack her guardian God
" Absent beside Eurotas,—where the halls
" Of Sparta need no rampart save her sons,—
" Careless of lyre and bow, of Deity
" Itself, content, the comrade of thy sport,
" To bear thy nets, to leash thy hounds, to breast
" The rugged hill, beside thee, and but learn
" From long companionship to love thee more.
" Midway betwixt the past and coming night
" Stood Titan, when the pair, their limbs unrobed
" And glistening with the olive's unctuous juice,
" In friendly contest with the discus vied.
" Whirled first in turn from Phœbus' poising hand
" The ponderous missile cleft the opposing clouds
" In arch enormous curving to its mark
" Far set in solid earth, a miracle
" Of strength and skill. The boy of Tænarus,
" Blind to the risk, with emulous ardour rushed
" To seize the falling orb that, as he stooped,
" From the hard cruel earth in cruel air
" Rebounding, smote him deadly on the brow.
" Pale, Hyacinthus, as thyself, the God
" Beheld thee fall, and in his arms upraised
" Now chafed thy limbs collapsed, now stanched the blood

" Fast-gushing, now with all appliance strove
" Of helpful herbs to stay thy fleeting soul,—
" Arts profitless for wound beyond a cure!
" As when some watered garden-plot the hand
" Of wanton mischief mars, the violet
" Or lily from its bruised and yellowing stem
" Hangs wilting, and supportless on the soil
" Its flaccid head the pendent poppy trails,
" So on his shoulders from the nerveless neck
" To its own weight unequal drooped the head
" Of Hyacinth:—and o'er him wailed the God:—
" ' Liest thou so, Œbalia's child, of youth
" ' Untimely robbed, and wounded by my fault,
" ' At once my grief and guilt?—This hand hath dealt
" ' Thy Death! 'tis I who send thee to the grave!
" ' And yet scarce guilty, unless guilt it were
" ' To sport, or guilt to love thee! Would this life
" ' Might thine redeem, or be with thine resigned!
" ' But thou—since Fate denies a God to die—
" ' Be present with me ever! Let thy name
" ' Dwell ever in my heart and on my lips,
" ' Theme of my lyre and burden of my song;
" ' And ever bear the echo of my wail
" ' Writ on thy new-born flower!—The time shall come
" ' When, with thyself associate, to its name
" ' The mightiest of the Greeks shall link his own!'
" Prophetic as Apollo mourned, the blood
" That with its dripping crimson dyed the turf
" Was blood no more: and sudden sprang to life
" A flower that wore the lily's shape, but not
" The lily's silver livery, purple-hued

" And brighter than all tinct of Tyrian shells:
" Nor with that boon of beauty satisfied,
" Upon the petals of its cup the God
" Stamped legible his sorrow's wailing cry,
" And 'Ai! Ai!' ever seems the flower to say.
" Proud of the son she bore, in honour yet
" His Sparta holds him, and with annual pomp
" Of rite ancestral celebrates his feast.

VI. " Inquire of Amathus, for mineral wealth
" Exhaustless famed, if honoured thus she holds
" Her own Propœtides:—and Amathus
" Would fain disown them with that other race
" She nurtured, from their rough and hornèd brows
" Cerastæ called, before whose gates the guest
" The altar saw of Hospitable Jove,
" And marked its stains, and deemed their crimson due
" To victim younglings of the flock or herd,—
" And learned too late—himself the sacrifice—
" What guilty rites the dismal stone defiled!
" Wroth with that impious crew, the Queen of Love
" Her Cyprus and its towns and pleasant fields
" Forswearing, turned to fly:—'Yet what'—she said—
" 'Have these my innocent cities done?—The haunts
" 'I love are guiltless. Let their barbarous sons
" 'By death or exile expiate their crimes!
" 'Or could I frame some doom that smacks of both,
" 'And change them into beasts?'—And as she paused,
" Doubting what form might fit them, on their brows
" Her glance she turned—'Horns have they?—Then their horns

" 'Still may they keep!' she cried,—and into shape
" Accordant of rough oxen changed the rest.

VII. " But for the bold Propœtides who dared
" Her Deity deny, the Goddess' wrath
" Found other fate. Them, earliest of their sex
" She doomed the harlot's hateful trade to ply;
" And, when upon their brazen cheeks the blush
" Of shame had ceased to glow, with easy change
" Transformed the hardened Prostitutes to stone.

VIII. " That guilty life and foul Pygmalion saw,
" And, wroth with Nature for the wickedness
" Innate in womankind, unwedded lived,
" And long endured no partner of his bed.
" He with the sculptor's happiest art had carved
" A masterpiece, of purest ivory,
" Such fair ideal of all female grace
" As woman never realised; and fell
" Himself enamoured of his proper work.
" A very Maid the figure seemed, instinct
" With life, and but by modesty restrained
" From instant motion. So all show of art
" By art itself was hidden, so like life
" The image looked, that, as the Artist gazed
" Admiring what himself had wrought, within
" His bosom wonder into passion warmed,
" And oft his hands the ivory tried, in doubt
" If flesh it were or ivory, scarce the last
" Convinced to think it.—Now upon her lips
" A kiss he prints, and dreams his kiss returned:—

" Now lover-wise he sues :—now passionate
" Embraces :—fancies that the yielding limbs
" Give to his touch, and fears their tenderness
" To bruise :—now plies her with all wooing gifts
" Grateful to Maids :—brings glistening shells, and gems
" Transparent polished, captured birds, and flowers
" Of lily, and the garden's thousand hues,
" And parti-coloured toys, and, from the grove
" Of poplars sought, the Heliads' amber tears :—
" Now robes her limbs with garments gay, and loads
" With rings her slender fingers, and her neck
" With pendent necklace clasps, and from her ears
" Hangs orient pearls, and round her waist a zone,—
" Becoming all ;—though fairest still she seemed
" In charm of naked beauty unadorned.
" Last on a couch whose purple trappings glow
" With tincture of Sidonian shells he lays
" His idol,—calls her ' wife ' and ' bedfellow,'
" And slopes and smooths the pillow's down as though
" Her head could feel its softness.—'Twas the day
" Most honoured in all Cyprus' Kalendar
" Of Venus' festival :—with gilded horns
" The milk-white heifers bled,—the air was thick
" With incense :—and with sacrificial rite
" Pygmalion suppliant at the altar stood,
" And ' O ye Gods'—he prayed—' omnipotent
" ' To grant what boon ye will, be mine for wife—
" ' (" My ivory Maid" he dared not say)—be mine
" ' One like my ivory Maid !' Above her shrine
" The golden Goddess present heard the prayer
" And knew its meaning : and with luminous tongue

" Of flame in friendly sign the altar-fire
" Blazed upward thrice to Heaven. The Sculptor sought
" His home, and, bending o'er the couch that bore
" His Maiden's lifelike image, to her lips
" Fond pressed his own,—and lo! her lips seemed warm,
" And warmer, kissed again:—and now his hand
" Her bosom seeks, and dimpling to his touch
" The ivory seems to yield,—as in the Sun
" The waxen labour of Hymettus' bees,
" By plastic fingers wrought, to various shape
" And use by use is fashioned. Wonder-spelled,
" Scarce daring to believe his bliss, in dread
" Lest sense deluded mock him, on the form
" He loves again and yet again his hand
" Lays trembling touch, and to his touch a pulse
" Within throbs answering palpable:—'twas flesh!
" 'Twas very Life!—Then forth in eloquent flood
" His grateful heart its thanks to Venus poured!
" The lips he kissed were living lips that felt
" His passionate pressure;—o'er the virgin-cheeks
" Stole deepening crimson;—and the unclosing eyes
" At once on Heaven and on their Lover looked!
" Auspicious Venus with her presence graced
" That bridal of her making; and, when months
" Thrice three in perfect orb had linked the horns
" Of Luna, to the twain a son was born,
" Paphos,—whose name the Paphian Isle preserves.

IX. " Next of his line was Cinyras:—a name
" Writ in the roll of Fortune's happier sons,
" Had Fate but childless let him live and die.—

" Fathers and Daughters, from the song whose theme
" Is horror, turn away! But, if perforce
" The dulcet numbers charm your ears to list,
" Deny me faith, and doubt the guilt I tell,—
" Or, if the guilt ye credit, credit too
" The penalty it paid!—If Nature bear
" Such stain, I thank her, that this realm of ours,
" This native northern Thrace, so far apart
" She sundered from the feverish climes that breed
" Ensample of such foulness! Araby
" May vaunt her spicy treasures, cinnamon,
" Amomus, and the fragrant groves that weep
" Her aromatic gums, the flowers that scent
" Her gales:—What boot of these, if Myrrha too
" She bears?—Too dear she pays that new-born tree!
" Myrrha, whom Cupid's self swears never dart
" Drawn from his quiver wounded, and from flame
" So foul indignant vindicates his torch!
" Some Sister 'twas of those Infernal Three
" With Stygian brand in Hydra's venom steeped
" That fire unhallowed kindled!—Guilt it is
" To hate a Parent;—greater guilt to love
" As thou did'st, Myrrha!—Suitors for thy hand
" The Orient sends its noblest, Asia's flower
" Around thee throngs, ambitious of thy bed:—
" Choose one of these, nor be thy choice the one
" Alone of all forbidden!—All too well
" Conscience arraigned the guilt, and, in her breast,
" The horrible impulse combated:—'Ah me!'—
" So with herself she communed—'Am I mad?
" 'What would I do? Aid me, ye pitying Gods,

" ' And thou fair Natural Piety, whose law
" ' Ordains a Parent's sacredness, resist,
" ' Forbid so foul a crime !—Yet, *is* it crime ?
" ' *Does* Natural Piety so stigmatise
" ' Such passion ?—All the lower life that fills
" ' Our world without impediment of choice
" ' Is free to love :—the amorous Bull bestrides
" ' His daughter Heifer, and the Stallion leaps
" ' The filly of his getting ;—Rams will tup
" ' The ewes they bred, and every bird of Heaven
" ' Unshamed with parent or with offspring pairs,
" ' Too happy in that licence !—Man alone
" ' With envious laws malignant bars to man
" ' What Nature sanctions in all creatures else.
" ' Yet have I heard of lands where Sires may wed
" ' Their Daughters, Sons their Mothers,—and where love
" ' So linked burns warmer :—why in such a clime
" ' Was I not born ?—Ah ! miserable me,
" ' Whose birthplace is my bane !—What boot to dwell
" ' On thoughts like these ? Begone, forbidden hopes !
" ' Of love most worthy is he,—but such love
" ' Alone as Fathers claim. Were I not born
" ' The daughter of great Cinyras, myself
" ' Might Cinyras have wedded ! Mine he is,
" ' So closely mine, that mine he cannot be !
" ' Our very nearness sunders us, and kills
" ' The hope that, were I stranger to his blood,
" ' I yet might cherish. Best it were to seek
" ' Some foreign shore, far from this native soil,
" ' And shun this wickedness :—Alas ! my heart
" ' Fast binds me here !—To see him,—hear him speak,—

" ' To feel his kiss,—and if no more—no more?
" ' What more, too impious Myrrha, dar'st thou dream?
" ' What foul confusion of all sacred names,
" ' All hallowed ties of kindred, would'st thou work?
" ' What horrible titles would thy frenzy win?
" ' Thy Mother's Rival, and thy Father's Whore!
" ' Thyself thine own Son's Sister, and thyself
" ' To thine own Brother Mother!—Would'st thou rouse
" ' The wrath of Hell's dread Sisters, bristling black
" ' With snaky locks, whose terrible torches flash
" ' Avenging madness in the eyes of Guilt?—
" ' Yet carnal-taintless, cleanse thy tainted soul,
" ' And quell these lawless thoughts that violate
" ' The sanctity of Nature!—Wert thou free
" ' To hope, thy hope were vain:—too good he is,—
" ' Too wise to see, too firm to hold the Right:—
" ' And yet——Oh! Gods! that he were mad as I!'
" So she:—but Cinyras, amid the throng
" Of worthy suitors doubtful which to choose,
" His daughter calls, and name by name recounts
" The rival list, and bids herself decide
" Whom would she like for husband. Silent long
" She stands, with heaving breast and eyes, suffused
" With surging tears, upon her Father fixed.
" That seeming sign of virgin modesty
" Not undispleased he marks, and cheers her, bids
" Her weep not, kisses her,—and with the kiss
" Thrills all her frame with passion. Then again
" He asks 'Whom would she for her spouse?'—and low
" She murmurs—'One like thee!'—Not understood
" The answer pleased!—'So ever pious be

"'Dear Daughter mine,' he said: and at the name
"Of Piety with conscience-guilt her soul
"Smote her, and bent to earth her shrinking eyes.
"'Twas midnight:—sleep had stilled the household's cares:—
"Alone, by that resistless fire consumed,
"Unhappy Myrrha restless wakes, and breathes
"Anew her frantic vows:—despairing now,
"Now resolute to venture,—now by shame
"And now by passion mastered,—fever-wrought,
"And mad to act, yet how to act at loss.
"As when some forest-giant by the axe
"Deep-wounded nods, and all the wood around
"Waits trembling, doubtful where the final stroke
"Shall bid its ruin crash,—so in that storm
"Of fierce-conflicting passions rocked her soul
"Now hither bent, now thither, as the gust
"Alternate swayed. No end, no rest she sees
"For love like hers, save Death:—and she can die!
"Her zone shall end her sorrows!—From her couch
"She springs, and from a beam the ready belt
"Suspends, and 'Oh! too fondly loved!' she sighs
"'Dear Cinyras, Farewell! and pitying guess
"'Why Myrrha died!'—But at her door the Nurse
"Her chamber's guardian, wakeful, overheard
"The murmured words, and rose in fright, and burst
"Within, and saw the instrument of death
"Ere all its work was done, and shrieked, and cut
"The knot, and from her neck the halter tore;
"And, now for tears at leisure, weeping flung
"Around her charge her arms, and earnestly

" Besought what grief that desperate deed impelled.
" But mute, with obstinate down-look bent on earth,
" Stood Myrrha, with the service wroth that marred
" The purposed Death. The urgent Nurse pursues
" Her quest, and shows her silver locks, and bares
" Her withered breast, and, by all memories
" Of childhood's kindly nurture, prays her speak
" Her hidden sorrow. With a groan she turns
" And hides her face. But pertinacious still
" The beldame presses :—more than secrecy
" She pledges :—'Tell me all! confess thy grief!
" 'Old as I am, my age is helpful yet.
" 'If this be madness, I can find thee cure
" 'Of healing charm and herb :—have evil eyes
" 'Bewitched thee?—magic art can loose the spell :—
" 'If Heaven be wroth with thee, the wrath of Heaven
" 'Due sacrifice appeases :—What beyond
" 'Remains to guess?—Thy house's fortunes stand
" 'Assured and growing, and thy Parents live,
" 'Mother and Sire :'—and at that name of Sire
" A heavy sigh from Myrrha's bosom burst.
" Nor yet suspicion of the guilty truth
" Dawns on the Nurse ; though in that sign she reads
" Some hidden passion, and importunate
" Implores her, be it what it may, to own
" The secret wish ; and to her aged breast
" She folds her, and around her neck entwines
" Her feeble arms :—'I see it now!' she cries—
" 'Thou lovest! Be of cheer! my wit can aid
" 'Thy love, and keep the secret from thy Sire.'
" Then maddened from her holding sprang the maid,

" And flung herself upon the bed :—' Begone!
" ' And spare my shame!'—and, as the beldame pressed
" Still urgent,—' Hence! begone! or cease to ask
" ' My torment's source :—What thou woulds't know is guilt
" ' To feel and crime to speak!'—Aghast the crone
" Heard her, and tremulous with age and fear
" Her hands outspread, and at her nursling's feet
" Knelt suppliant, now with blandishment, and now
" With threat, if still her secret she denies,
" The fatal girdle's story to disclose,
" And tell her kindred of the purposed Death ;
" Pledging—so only she avows her love—
" All service to its aid. The wretched girl
" Looked up, and in her Nurse's bosom poured
" A flood of passionate weeping ;—long she strove
" For words, but found no voice :—then, in her robe
" Veiling her crimson cheeks,—' O Mother mine
" ' Too happy in thy Husband's arms!' at last
" She said, and groaned, and ceased. And, as she caught
" Her sense, cold tremors shook the Nurse's frame—
" Erect with horror stood her whitened hair,—
" And long and earnest that unhallowed lust
" She combated : and Myrrha heard her plead
" And owned—how could she else—the counsel just;
" Yet heard obdurate, and for all response
" Had but one word,—' I win him, or I die!'
" ' Live then!'—the beldame cried—' and win thy—love!'
" She dared not say ' thy Parent :'—and by Heaven
" And all its Gods her wicked service pledged.
" The season 'twas of annual festival
" When, stoled in spotless white, the Cyprian Dames

" With fragrant first-fruit of all kindly grain
" And herb and fruit great Ceres' altars crown ;
" And for nine nights apart—so wills the rite—
" Lie strangers to their Lords :—the Monarch's spouse,
" Cenchreïs, first in place the worship led.
" That favouring time, when half the regal couch
" Was vacant, seized the evil-zealous crone,
" And hot with revel found the King, and told
" Alas ! too true a tale—how, passion-wrought
" A beauteous Maid, whose name she might not speak,
" Pined for his love. Her age the Monarch asked :—
" ' The same,' she said, ' as Myrrha's :'—and, with charge
" To bring her, back she sped. ' Rejoice !' she cried,
" ' My child ! the field is ours ! thy wish is won !'
" But not with all her heart the wretched girl
" Had welcome for the words :—presaging fears
" Within sad warned her of the woe to come :—
" Though 'mid the whirl and tumult at her heart
" Joy still was uppermost. The hour it was
" Of midnight-silence, when Boötes' wain
" Athwart the Trions wheels its course oblique :—
" And to her crime she went !—The golden Moon
" Forsook the skies,—in pall of sable-cloud
" The Stars fled shrouded,—blackest darkness quenched
" All fires of Night. Thou, Icarus, wert first
" To veil thy beams, and thou, Erigone,
" Heaven-guerdoned Martyr of thy filial love !
" Thrice, as she trod the gloom, her stumbling foot
" Gave warning to return :—and thrice the owl
" Funereal omen hooted. On she went :—
" Night and its shadows hid what shame was left :—

" One hand fast clinging to the guiding Nurse,
" One in the darkness groping by the wall.
" So to the chamber's threshold crept the pair:
" And, as the beldame pressed the yielding door
" And led her in, together knocked her knees
" Beneath her tottering weight,—the blood forsook
" Her colourless cheeks,—all nerve, all courage failed;—
" At point to sin, the horror of the guilt
" Appalled her soul:—Would Heaven she ne'er had dared
" That venture, or could yet unknown retreat!
" But onward to the couch the elder drew
" Her shrinking form:—'Take, Cinyras, thine own!'
" She said, and thrust her to him. And the King
" To his foul sheets his proper bowels took,
" Soothing what seemed a virgin's natural fears
" With fondling name of 'Daughter' or of 'Child,'
" Apt for her tenderer years; and heard perchance
" 'Father' in whispering accents murmured back,
" Lest one true name should lack to crown the crime!
" Full of her Sire from that incestuous bed
" She rose, and, laden with the fruit of sin,
" Looked for the coming night:—nor that alone
" The guilty commerce ended;—till the King,
" Curious to know the partner of a joy
" So oft renewed, struck sudden light, and saw
" At once his crime and child! No word he spake—
" Horror lacked speech—but from the ready sheath
" Hung by the couch he snatched his gleaming blade
" And there had slain her;—but protecting night
" And outer darkness helped her hasty flight,
" And marred the blow. Fast, far, through many a clime,

" O'er many a land, she fled! The palmy groves
" Of Araby, Panchæa's fragrant fields
" Were left,—and nine times now had Luna filled
" Her orbing horns, when, faint, and travel-worn,
" And weak to bear her waxing burden's weight,
" Sabæa gave her shelter and repose.
" Scarce conscious what she asked, and half distraught
" 'Twixt dread of Death and misery of Life,
" Her piteous prayer she uttered—' O ye Gods!
" ' If Gods have mercy for a sin confessed,
" ' I own your sentence righteous, nor refuse
" ' To bear the suffering that your wrath inflicts.
" ' Yet, of your grace, let me not longer shame
" ' In life the living, or in death the dead!
" ' Shut me from either realm! and, in some form
" ' Of changed existence grant nor Life nor Death!'
" To sin confessed the Gods are merciful,
" And that last prayer was heard. Even as she spoke
" The rising soil her lower limbs embraced,
" And downward from her sprouting feet a root,
" Fit to support some tall tree's towering trunk,
" Its fibres struck:—what erst was bone was wood.
" Alone unchanged the central marrow's pith
" Remained:—her blood was sap—her arms were boughs—
" Her fingers twigs—her hardened skin was bark!
" And now the climbing rind her pregnant womb
" Enlaced, and now her bosom now her neck
" O'ercasing rose:—till, of that lingering fate
" Impatient, down she sank her head and met
" Half-way the mounting wood, and all her face
" Veiled in its barky shroud!—All corporal sense

" In that changed form extinguished, still she weeps
" Tears not unprized: and still the odorous drops
" Of myrrh retain the weeper's name, and tell
" To all succeeding times her wretched tale.

X. " But in the tree the infant, sin-conceived,
" Waxed yet, and quickening from its parent-womb
" Sought way to life. The growing burden swelled
" And strained the bulging trunk, that, if it felt
" A mother's pangs, lacked words to tell its pain,
" And call Lucina's kindly power to aid.
" Yet labouring seemed the tree with inward throes
" To heave, and audible each writhing branch
" Made inarticulate moan, and all its girth
" Was wet with oozing drops of perfumed tears.
" Compassionate of that torment, uninvoked
" Lucina came, and touched the boughs, and spake
" The words that lighten labour; and the bark
" Was cloven, and the living boy was born.
" His feeble infant-wail the Naiads heard,
" And cradled in their softest herbage laid
" The babe, and washed him in his mother's tears.
" Even Envy's self his perfect beauty praised,
" Fair as the rosy forms of naked Loves
" A Painter's fancy shapes:—Or these disarm
" Of quiver and of bow, or this equip
" With equal weapons, and the same they seemed!
" Scarce-marked and silent sped the fleeting years;—
" Alas! what speeds like Time?—His Grandsire's Son,
" His Sister's issue, the late tree-born child,
" Fairest of babes, was boy, was youth, was man,

" With ever-waxing beauty,—boy than babe,
" And youth than boy more lovely, man than youth,—
" Ordained to kindle in the Queen of Love
" A passion that avenged his mother's fires.
" Her as her quivered Cupid kissed, a shaft
" Slipped from its sheath, and with unpurposed wound
" Her snowy bosom grazed. The Goddess felt
" The smart, and thrust away the careless child;
" Though, from so mere a scratch, no thought at first
" Of danger struck her;—but the inward hurt
" Was deeper than it seemed. By mortal charms
" Inflamed, no longer now Cythera's shores
" She cares to haunt, or Paphos ocean-girt,
" Or fishy Cnidus, or where Amathus
" Teems with its mineral burden:—Heaven itself
" Ceases to charm,—and where Adonis is
" Than Heaven itself is dearer. On the boy
" She hangs,—no moment parts her from his side:—
" She,—wont of yore, beneath the summer-shade
" Reclined, at ease to prank her idle charms,—
" Girt to the knee like huntress Dian's self
" O'er hill, o'er rock, through forest shares his sport,
" And cheers his hounds on all the timorous tribes
" Whose chase is dangerless,—the antlered stag,
" The dappled doe, or headlong-flying hare:—
" But for the robber-wolf, the tusky boar,
" The rending claws that arm the grizzly bear,—
" The lion red with slaughter of the herd,—
" All these she shuns; and thee, Adonis, warns—
" (Ah! had but Fate that warning let thee heed!—)
" Thou shun them too. 'Whatever flies, be bold

" ' To follow; what attacks, be wise and fly!
" ' Be prudent for my sake, dear youth, nor tempt
" ' The strife where Nature arms the savage foe,
" ' Nor buy too dear thy glory with my grief!
" ' Thy youth, thy beauty, all the charms that moved
" ' Thy Venus, move not lions, nor subdue
" ' The fury of the bristly boar, aroused
" ' And flashed in lightning from his fiery eyes.
" ' But most beware the tawny lion's spring!
" ' Him and his race I hate!'—' And why?' the Boy
" Asks curious. ' List,'—she said—' and hear a tale
" ' Wondrous, of by-gone guilt and by-gone woe.
" ' But this unwonted toil hath made me faint,
" ' And yonder poplar with its happy shade
" ' Invites, where soft the green turf underneath
" ' Spreads us a couch:—there rest we!' And she flung
" Her limbs upon the grass, and pressed at once
" Its verdure and her lover, and, her wealth
" Of glossy tresses pillowing on his breast,
" With frequent kisses broken told her tale.

XI. " Haply her name hath reached thine ears, whose speed
" All manly rivals vanquished in the race:—
" No fable 'tis—for she *did* vanquish all;
" Though whether for that fleetness more renowned,
" Or form of faultless grace, 'twere hard to say.
" Her, as she questioned of the Gods what fate
" In wedlock waited her, the Oracle
" Thus answered:—' Of no husband hast thou need,
" ' O Atalanta! Thou shalt shun the bond

" ' Of marriage, nor escape it; and be wed
" ' But in thyself yet living to be lost.'
" Awed by the warning of the words of Heaven
" A virgin lived she:—many a wooer sought
" Her hand, and one sole answer all repulsed:
" ' His wife alone am I who in the race
" ' Shall conquer me! Essay it, if ye will.
" ' Who beats me wins a Bride,—but whom I beat
" ' Wins only Death! Be that the contest's law.'
" Firmly she held her purpose:—but, such spell
" Hath beauty, none the less an eager crowd
" Of amorous youths the hard condition dared
" And paid.—It chanced one day the unequal strife
" To witness came Hippomenes:—and, 'What!'
" He cried—' Who stakes existence for a wife?
" ' What fools are these who venture life for love?'
" Even as he spake, her face, her robeless charms
" (Like mine, like thine, so wert thou but from man
" To woman changed—) flashed by him. Lifting high
" His hands, ' O pardon me,'—he said,—' whom now
" ' I blamed! I knew not what the prize ye sought!'
" And passion followed praise, and pale he watched
" The contest, envious lest some youth outrun
" The maid and win her. ' Why '—he thought—' should I
" ' Alone not try the fortune of the field?
" ' Heaven helps the bold!' Ere well the thought was shaped
" Light as a bird of air, along the course
" The maiden shot beyond him! Never shaft—
" He swore—sped swifter from a Scythian bow!
" Yet not so much the swiftness, as the grace

" Of motion and of limb the swiftness lent,
" His straining gaze pursued. The breezes fanned
" Her sandals' glittering pinions:—free adown
" Her ivory back her floating tresses streamed:—
" Her cincture's fringe played crimson to her knees
" Flushing with rose her delicate body's snow:—
" As, in some lordly palace' marble-court,
" The awning overspread in purple flood
" Of shadow bathes the fresco-pictured walls.
" As rapt he gazes, at the goal she stands
" Crowned victor in the race:—the vanquished sigh,
" And meet their doom. But undeterred the youth
" Springs to the lists, and fixing on the Maid
" His ardent gaze, 'Contend with me!'—he cries—
" 'Nor from these laggards wrest this easy fame!
" 'If Fortune speed me, thou need'st never blush
" 'So to be won. The Son of Megareus,
" 'Onchestius' heir, whose Sire was Neptune's self
" 'Lord of the Waters, am I; nor, methinks
" 'Unworthy of that strain:—Hippomenes
" 'Defeated crowns thy name with endless praise!'
" With softened glance upon her challenger
" The Maiden looked, as doubtful, in such strife,
" Which fate were happier, or to win, or lose.
" 'What envious God,'—she said,—'who hates the young
" 'And fair, his ruin vows, and with the risk
" 'Of that fresh life this wedlock bids him woo?
" 'I own myself not worth this sacrifice!
" 'I care not for his beauty, though such charms
" 'As his might move me, if man's charms *could* move:—
" 'His years, his youth I pity:—not himself.

"'What if he bears a soul that fears not death?
"'What if from Neptune fourth his line he trace?—
"'What if he loves me, and at cost of life
"'Would win,—if Fate denies me to be won?—
"'Hence, Stranger, while thou may'st!—a bloody bed
"'Is mine, and who would wed me courts his Death!
"'Be warned, and woo elsewhere!—No other Maid
"'Will say thee "Nay:" fool were she if she did!—
"'Yet wherefore should I spare thee more than those
"'Before thee lost? He knows the risk he runs,
"'And undeterred beheld the forfeit paid:—
"'Is he of life so weary?—Let him die!
"'Yet should he therefore die, because with me
"'He longs to live?—Must Death be Love's reward,
"'And victory brand me with eternal shame
"'Without my fault?—Ah! would he cease to claim
"'This contest, or the Gods his madness help
"'And make him swifter in the race than I!
"'Alas! his fair young face is like a girl's!
"'Would Heaven, Hippomenes, thy hapless eyes
"'Had never looked on mine! Thou should'st not die
"'So soon for one, who, had her kinder Fates
"'Not barred all woman's hope of wedlock-bliss,
"'Happy in such a lot, with thee alone
"'Of all mankind had gladly shared her bed!'
"So ran her thought, half-spoken. Ignorant
"How earliest Cupid touched her novice-heart
"With fire, she loved, and did not know she loved.
"But loud her Father and his folk demand
"The wonted contest. Ere he starts, to me
"Brief earnest prayer Neptunus' child prefers:—
"'Cythera's Goddess aid me now! nor quench

"'In Death the flame thou did'st thyself inspire!'
"The favouring breeze bore to my ear the words,
"And I was moved,—I own it. But the time
"Was brief for help.—A plain there is, of all
"The fruitful isle most fertile, of its Swains
"Called Tamasenum,—appanage of old
"By Cyprian Fathers to my shrine assigned:—
"And in its midst a tree, whose golden boughs
"With golden leaves wave rustling in the breeze.
"Thence, as it chanced, I came, with golden fruit
"Of apples three fresh-gathered:—and, unseen
"By any save Hippomenes, approached
"The youth, and gave, and taught him how to use.
"And now the trumpet sounded, and the twain
"Shot from the line! Methought their flying feet
"Scarce seemed to touch the sand! so light a step
"Had skimmed unwet the glass of summer-seas,
"Nor bent the ripened harvest's standing gold!
"All clamour of the crowd, all cheering cries
"Were for the youth:—'Now! now! Hippomenes!'
"They shouted—'Now's the moment! Press her hard!
"'No breathing-time allow her! Speed and win!'
"I know not, I, to which, or youth or maid,
"More grateful rang that cheering. Many a time
"She might have passed him, yet forbore to pass,
"As loth to lose the sight of that fair face
"That spelled her eyes. But now his panting breath
"Came short,—and still the goal was far away:—
"Then of those apples three the first he took
"And flung upon the plain:—the glittering bait
"Caught her, and, while a moment from her course
"She swerved and stooped to clutch the rolling gold,

" The youth was far ahead. The multitude
" Rent Heaven with shouting. But her swifter speed
" Of foot too soon regained the space it lost,
" And left the boy behind her. Then he dropped
" A second, and a second time the bribe
" Delayed her, and a second time she caught
" And overpassed him :—nor the goal was now
" Far distant. 'Aid me Goddess dear!' he gasped,
" 'Make good the gift thou gavest!'—And he flung
" With all the strength of youth, athwart the course,
" The third, where most 'twas difficult to win
" Again the distance lost. Doubtful she gazed
" To follow or to leave it ;—but I wrought
" Her choice to follow, and with added weight
" Informed the lifted fruit, and with that stay
" And that unwonted burden marred her speed.
" Brief—lest my tale last longer than the race—
" So aided shot the victor to the goal
" And won the prize he sought.—Be thou my judge,
" Adonis,—did I fairly earn, or no,
" My meed of thanks, of incense, and of rite?—
" No meed of thanks, of incense, or of rite
" The ingrate paid. My favour turned to wrath ;
" And, burning at that slight, lest after-times
" Should slight me too, of both I swore to make
" Example.—Thence as with his bride he passed,
" Beside an ancient temple lay their road,
" Which, in old time, for some accomplished vow,
" Echion to the Mother of the Gods,
" Great Cybele, had reared. The journey's length
" To rest invited :—and my power the boy
" Stirred with untimely passion of desire.

" Beside the fane a cavern-like recess
" Stood, pumice-roofed, and dim with doubtful light,
" By ancient reverence hallowed, where a-row
" The temple's guardian stored his carven Gods:—
" That sacred spot they entered, and defiled!
" Inward the very statues turned their eyes,
" And scarce the tower-crowned Goddess spared at once
" Deep under Styx to whelm the guilty pair:—
" Too light such sentence seemed. With sudden change
" Their smooth white necks a tawny mane o'erspread,—
" Their hands, their feet, were curved in cruel claws,—
" Prone sank their shoulders, bestial,—all their strength
" Centred in breadth of chest;—with lashing tails
" They swept the ground:—with fury flashed their eyes:—
" And, for sweet human words, a sullen roar
" Was all their speech. The forest-solitudes
" Their bridal-chamber spread. A terror yet
" To vulgar eyes, they champ the bit, and yoked
" Obedient drag the Mighty Mother's car.
" Of these, Belovèd, and all fiercer brutes
" That face, not fly, the hunter, be thou ware;
" Lest over-boldness bring us both to woe!
" So warned the Goddess, ere aloft through Heaven
" Her swan-drawn chariot rose:—but fiery youth
" And prudent counsel never were at one.
" That very time it chanced that from his lair
" The questing pack had roused a grim old boar,
" Whom, as from covert forth he broke, the son
" Of Cinyras with arrow sidelong-aimed
" Struck in the flank. With foamy jaws, distort
" By rage and agony, the monster wrenched
" Red with his blood the weapon from the wound,

" And turned, and furious charged the flying boy
" Too late to flight addressed, and—all his tusk
" Sheathed in his groin—hurled lifeless to the ground!
" Far off the Goddess knew that dying shriek,
" And turned, and urged her snowy swans, and sped
" Too late to aid,—descending but to see
" Bathed in its blood her lover's mangled corse,—
" And frantic from her chariot sprang, and tore
" Her hair and rent her robe, and passionate
" Beat on her guiltless bosom, for that deed
" The pitiless Fates upbraiding:—' Yet not all
" ' Ye take!' she cried—' not all! Thou shalt not lack
" ' Adonis, such eternal monument
" ' Of Love as Love can give! The annual pomp
" ' Of funeral-rite shall mourn thee, and my grief
" ' Be year by year commemorate and renewed!
" ' Ay, and from this thy blood a flower shall bloom!
" ' Had Proserpine of old the power to change
" ' A rival to the herb that bears the name
" ' Of Menthe yet, and may not Venus now
" ' Unblamed transform Adonis to a flower?'—
" She said,—and o'er the life-stream ebbing yet
" Flung odorous nectar-drops:—and—like a pool
" With flashing bubbles flecked by sudden shower,—
" Sprinkled with that celestial juice, the blood
" To simmer seemed, and in a brief hour's space
" Put forth a flower, with colour like its own,
" Deep-glowing as the hue that underlies
" The tough pomegranate's rind:—but brief of date
" And grace, frail-blossomed, and by every breath
" Light-scattered of the Winds that give it name."

THE

METAMORPHOSES

OF

PUBLIUS OVIDIUS NASO

BOOK XI.

THE METAMORPHOSES.

BOOK XI.

I. So as the Thracian Bard the rocks and beasts
And crowding forests drew, with dulcet charm
Of blended string and voice, to list his lay,—
From a near hill-top's height Ciconia's dames,
A maddened rout,—their frenzied bosoms clad
With loose-girt hide of tiger or of pard,—
Espied him, and surrounded. And one tossed
Her tresses to the breeze:—"Is this"—she shrieked—
"The wretch who dares to scorn our sex?"—and hurled
Her thyrsus in his face:—the weapon, blunt
With vine-leaves wreathed, made only bruise, not wound.
And then another flung a stone, that, checked
By the song's sweetness, paused in middle air
And at the singer's feet innocuous fell,
As asking pardon for so dire offence.
Then fast and fierce, as though Erinnys fired
Their breasts, unmeasured poured the missile shower,
And still the wondrous magic of the song
Baffled the tempest, till the brazen blare

Of Berecynthian trump and cymbal-clang
And shriek and howl of Mænad-frenzy drowned
Its music, and, un-spelled, the hailing stones
Blushed with the Minstrel's blood. Nor rested there
Their fury, but on beast and bird and snake—
(The circling audience of that theatre
Rapt with the song—) fell indiscriminate
With slaughter. Then upon the Bard they swarmed,—
As round the bird of Night the smaller fowl
Swarm clamorous, ere the twilight caught abroad,—
Or in the morning-Circus round the stag
Closes the yelping pack. The thyrsus, wreathed
For holier use with tendrils of the vine,
And stones, and clods, and branches torn from trees
Supplied them weapons; and, lest deadlier arms
Their rage should lack, hard by, it chanced, a gang
Of sturdy peasants through the stubborn glebe
With tug of straining oxen drove the share,
Ridging the ordered furrow for the seed;
Who, as that frantic rout they saw, their toil
Affrighted fled, and flying left bestrewn
With spade, and rake, and hoe, the abandoned field.
These seized the furious troop, and from the heads
Of the slain oxen mangled tore the horns,
And, backward bounding to their bloody work,
Set on the Bard, and, suppliant as he clasped
His hands, and raised in impotent appeal
The voice whose magic ne'er till now was vain,
With impious fury tore him, limb from limb!
And from those lips, ah Heaven! whose tuneful strains
The very rocks could thrill, and savage brutes

Soften with sense of new-felt harmony,
Drove forth to all the winds the fleeting soul!
No bird that wings the air, no beast that roams
The earth, but mourned thee, Orpheus! Thee the rocks
Lamented, and the woods that oft entranced
Had followed on thy song:—with heavy boughs
Depressed the weeping trees their foliage shed;
With their own tears the flooded rivers swelled;
And sad, with tresses loose and sable stole,
Went mourning all the Nymphs of stream and grove.
Wide-scattered lay his limbs:—but Head and Lyre
Thy waters, Hebrus, to the Ocean bore:—
And lo! adown the stream the floating harp
Made plaintive music, and the lifeless lips
Yet vocal, murmuring low with plaintive dirge,
Woke plaintive Echo from the answering banks,
Till Ocean from its native flood received
The freight, and washed it to the Lesbian shores.
There, stranded on Methymna's beach, and dank
With dripping brine, a venomous serpent found
The head, and would have gorged;—but Phœbus saw
And with late succour came, and, ere his fangs
Closed on the feast, with ravenous maw distent
And gaping, smote the reptile into stone.
But downward, rapt through Earth, the parting Ghost
To Hades sped, and threading, not unknown,
That darksome path twice-traversed, sought the place
Of happier souls, and in its greedy arms
Clasped once again its loved Eurydice.
There roam they, ne'er to part:—or by her side

He moves, or follows now or now precedes
Her consort-shade, nor fears to look behind.

II. But, sorrowing for the Bard who hymned his praise,
Lycœus with no tardy vengeance smote
Those guilty dames of Thrace; and, in the woods
Yet as they roamed, to earth their fettered feet
Fast-rooted, and with downward curve and point
Their sprouting toes drove fibrous through the soil.
And, as a bird, new conscious of restraint,
Trapped in some crafty fowler's treacherous snare,
With piteous fluttering pants and plaintive cry,
And, struggling for release, but faster binds
The tangling meshes round its prisoned shank,—
So each, as cleaving to the soil she felt
Her heavier foot, in sudden terror strove
To fly and strove in vain:—the hampering root
Held fast the sole and barred the elastic spring.
Down looks she, and astounded seeks in vain
Or toe or foot:—a barky crust alone
She sees, that o'er her slender ankles creeps;—
And, with despairing palm upon her thigh
Smiting, smites only wood! Wood grows she all,—
Bosom and shoulders harden, and, outspread
From the trunk's either side, her stiffening arms
Seem very boughs, and are the boughs they seem!

III. IV. V. Nor so appeased was Bacchus,—but, with choir
Of gentler votaries girt, the region's self
Deserting, passed where by the vine-clad slopes

Of his own Tmolus winds Pactolus' wave,
Untinged as yet with gold, and for its wealth
Of sands unenvied of its neighbour streams.
Of all his train Silenus only lacked,
Whom, as behind he lagged, with years or wine
Reeling, or both, and ivy-garlanded,
A band of Phrygian hinds had seized and dragged
Before their Monarch, Midas,—in all lore
Expert of Bacchic rite and mystery,—
Whilome by Orpheus and Eumolpus taught
Wisest of Thrace and Athens. At a glance
The friend and comrade of the God he knew;
And twice five jovial days and nights twice five
An honoured guest in revel held the Sire,
And on the eleventh morn, when Lucifer
Before him drove the starry flock of Heaven,
With jocund convoy o'er the Lydian bounds
The truant Elder to his Pupil bore.
Glad for the Sire restored, the grateful God
For guerdon bade the Phrygian name and have
What wish he would,—nor knew how thoughtless greed
Could mar and useless make so fair a boon.
"Grant," quoth the eager King, "whate'er I touch
"May turn to gold!"—And that pernicious gift
So pledged the Godhead granted, sad at heart
To find the fool lack wit for wiser choice.
Delighted with the evil boon the King
Departed, and, its virtue hot to prove,
Touched trying this and that, and, scarce his sense
Believing, from a roadside ilex plucked
A jutting branch, and lo! the branch was gold!

A stone he lifted, and the lifted stone
Paled into gold;—he touched a clod, the clod
A yellow ingot glowed;—the ripening ears
Of harvest hardened golden in his hands;—
As from the orchard of the Hesperides
Fresh plucked, the apple that he gathered shone:—
He leaned against a column, and with gold
Coated the burnished shaft:—he stooped to lave
His hands, and glittering from his fingers streamed
Such golden shower as that which slipped of old
From Danaë's clasping palms. 'Twas boundless wealth,
Beyond all hope, all count! A golden world,
At will his own!—And now the banquet-board
With viand and with cate the nimble slaves
Spread plenteous for their lord, and to the feast
Joyous he comes:—Why, what is this?—He breaks
A loaf, and, as he breaks it, in his hands
The kindly gift of Ceres turns to gold!
The flesh he strives to chew, between his jaws
Hardened to gold, defies his baffled teeth!
And the pure lymph that with the nobler juice
Of Bacchus, giver of that fatal gift,
He mingles, chokes his heaving gorge, and drips
And dribbles from his lips in fluid gold!
Stunned with new sense of that unheard-of woe,—
Rich beyond hope and wretched past despair,—
Loathing the wealth he cannot choose but coin,—
Cursing the boon that but an hour ago
He prayed for,—stood the wretch,—his hungry maw
Unfed, his fevered gullet parched with thirst,
Starving,—with torment not unmerited

Of golden victual mocked and golden drink!
Then raising high his splendid arms, he spread
His hands to Heaven:—"I sinned! I sinned!" he cried.
"Be merciful, Lycœus, and forgive
"The sin, and free me from this glittering curse!"
The kindly Godhead heard the fault confessed,
Nor loth to cancel what but for the faith
Of promise pledged he ne'er had ratified,
Revoked the boon, and set the suppliant free.
"Yet this," he said, "ere of this golden-taint
"Self-sought thou purge thee throughly, must thou do:—
"Seek out the stream that flows by Sardis' walls;
"And, facing still its downward course, ascend
"The steepy hills that bank it, till thou reach
"Its source, and where the fount flows freest plunge
"Thy head, and cleanse thy body and thy guilt!"
Glad to the ordered waters fared the King,
And, as he bathed him, dyed the flood, and lo!
The stream ran yellow and the man was clean!
Impregnate ever with that antique seed
Teem all the bordering fields, and every clod
That drinks the wave is starred with sparkling gold!
Thenceforward,—sick at sight and thought of wealth,
Of towns, of men,—amid the hills and woods
And forest-caves where haunts the Silvan Pan
He wandered,—cured in body, but in soul
Unchanged, and still the fool he was before,
And doomed once more his folly's tax to pay.
For, as one morn it chanced, where Tmolus towers
In broad precipitous height,—and, (Sardis here,
There small Hypæpe nestling at his feet,—)

Looks far athwart the seas, with instrument
Of oaten reed and yellow wax compact
Piping sat Pan, and with his rustic notes
So charmed the thronging Nymphs that in conceit
He passed Apollo's self; and, challenging
The Lord of Music to the unequal strife,
Bade ancient Tmolus judge betwixt the twain.
High o'er his forests, where his level top
Gave unobstructed audience, took his place
The Mountain-God:—an oaken chaplet wreathed
His reverend locks, and o'er his arching brows
With pendent acorns played. To Pan he looked:—
"The Judge is ready"—quoth he—"sing thou first
"O Shepherd-God!" and on his rustic pipes
Pan blew; and Midas—for amid the throng
Stood Midas—raptured heard the barbarous strain.
To Phœbus next he turned, and all his groves
Turned with their Lord, expectant of the song.
Crowned with Parnassian laurel, Tyrian-stoled
With robe whose trailing purple swept the ground
Stood forth Apollo:—in his dexter hand
The plectrum, in his left the lyre he held,
With gem and Indian ivory fair inlaid;—
In attitude and gesture manifest Lord
And Master of his art; and, as he swept
With skilful touch the strings, old Tmolus heard
Entranced, and with no doubting sentence bade
The vanquished pipe confess the victor lyre:—
And all, save one, who heard the just decree
Applauded:—Midas only challenged loud
For partial the award. The Delian heard,

And, wrathful, of their human shape deprived
His tasteless ears:—erect they rose, in length
Enormous, shaggy, and with flexile root
Twirled uncouth on the pivot of his skull.
So where he sinned he suffered:—in all else
A Man, but monstrous with an Ass's ears!
Awhile a turban's purple served to hide
The ludicrous shame;—but soon the tonsor-slave
Whose scissors trimmed his locks the secret saw
And burned to tell; till,—dreading to divulge,
Yet impotent to keep it,—forth he went,
And by the river's margin dug unseen,
And, to the hollow stooping, whispered low
The story of his lord's prodigious ears,
And filled again the pit, and 'neath the clods
Stamped down the tale, and silent went his way.
When lo! a marvel!—from the spot upsprang
A clump of waving reeds that, as it grew,
Betrayed him, murmuring to the summer winds
The buried words—"Midas hath Ass's ears!"

VI. So venged, from Tmolus Phœbus soared aloft
Through Heaven, and by the Ocean-strait surnamed
Of Nepheleïan Helle—to his left
Sigœum, to his right the Rhœtian cape—
Beside the shrine of Panomphæan Jove
Alighted, 'mid the realms of Ilus' son
Laomedon, what time the monarch traced
The lines of rising Troy,—a vast design
Of labour infinite and countless cost.
There, with that other God whose trident rules

The turbulent Seas, a mortal form he took
And toiling for a labourer's plighted wage
Wrought at the Phrygian's walls. The work was done:—
The City stood:—and straight the faithless King
Forswore the compact and withheld the meed.
"This shalt thou rue!" quoth Neptune, and in wrath
Dashed all his billows on the niggard shore,
And in the briny deluge whelmed the wealth
Of husbandry, and made the Land a Sea.
Nor so avenged content, the Monarch's child
Bound to a rock, a sea-born monster's prey,
Exposed he doomed to perish:—but with help
And rescue came Alcides, and the maid
Set free, and from her Father claimed the steeds
To pay that service pledged: and in his turn
Defrauded of his meed, indignant stormed
The walls and sacked the doubly-perjured town.
Stout comrade in that warfare, Telamon,
Not ill repaid, Hesione received
For prize:—his brother Peleus elder-born
Long since was famous with a Goddess-bride,
Of that alliance prouder than of birth:—
Enough of grandsons boasted birth from Jove;—
But none, save he, had Goddess won for wife.

VII. Prophetic thus to Thetis long ago
Had Nereus spoken:—"Goddess of the Sea!
"Be wooed, be wed, be Mother of a Son
"In deeds and fame superior to his Sire!"
Jove heard the counsel, and, the flame that burned
In his own bosom stifling, lest himself

Should give the world a greater than Himself,
The dangerous daughter of the wave forbore,
And to his grandson Peleus, elder-born
Of Œacus, resigned the suit that else
Himself had gladlier pressed,—and bade the youth
Be bold and win the Sea-Nymph to his arms.
A bay there is in Western Thessaly
That bow-like curves the shore, with jutting peaks
At entrance flanked, and, but for lack of depth,
A haven perfect-planned. The shallow tide
Far inland ripples to a sandy beach,—
Where whoso treads may pass unclogged and leave
No foot-mark,—solid,—clear from tangling weed,—
With myrtle-thicket fringed. A grotto scooped
By Art or Nature,—haply more by Art,—
Stood in its midst, where oft for cool repose
The Nymph unrobed would guide her dolphin-steed.
There slumbering Peleus caught her, and, all prayer
Of gentle wooing wasted, forceful clasped
With ruder arms the Goddess, and had won,
But with her wonted arts to various shapes
Shifting she baffled him;—a bird she strove
To soar,—the bird he held;—a senseless tree
She stood, and to the senseless trunk he clung;—
Last roared, a brindled tigress:—and, alarmed
The youth his hold let go,—the Nymph was gone!
Then with libation poured upon the wave,
And fibrous entrails of the flock, and fume
Of fragrant incense, to the Ocean-Gods
His prayer he made; and through the parting flood
Carpathian Proteus rose:—"Be resolute,

" Œacides! thy Bride shall yet be won!
" Watch thou, when next the grotto's coolness lulls
" Her sense to slumber, and with ready net
" Upon her steal, and mesh her,—hold her fast!
" Whatever of her hundred shapes she try,
" Imprisoned keep her, till her proper form
" Resumed she wear." So spake the sinking Seer,
And o'er his closing accents closed the flood.
By this had Titan to the western wave
Sloped his descending wheels;—the day was worn,—
When, fair arising from the flood, her cave
And wonted couch the Nereïd sought and scarce
Had slept, when round her form the ready net
Of Peleus closed. Each novel shape was tried
In vain:—the tangling meshes powerless held
Her prisoned limbs. Then, conscious of defeat,
" Heaven helps thee,"—sighed she,—"'tis to Heaven I yield!"
And blushing to her captor stood confessed
Thetis in all her charms. The hero flung
Around the beauteous prize his raptured arms,
And with the great Achilles filled his Bride.

VIII. Thrice happy in his wife and in his son,
Lacking no earthly bliss,—but that the guilt
Of murdered Phocus weighed upon his soul,—
Had Peleus lived. That stain of brother's blood
An exile from his home and father-land
To Trachis drove him forth, where Ceyx ruled
A peaceful Monarch o'er a willing realm,
The son of Phosphor, and as Phosphor fair

To look upon, though now unlike himself,
And wan with weeping for a brother lost.
Weary with care and travel thither came
The wanderer and—(what wealth of flock and herd
He owned left pasturing in a neighbour vale—)
With scanty following passed the gates, and garbed
In suppliant guise sought audience of the King,
And told his name and race. His crime alone
He hid, and, colouring with some specious tale
His journey's cause, of Ceyx' grace implored
Some spot assigned him or in town or field
Where he and his might dwell. The kindly King
Made answer:—"No inhospitable realm
"Is this"—he said—"we rule:—the humblest here
"May shelter claim and have his claim allowed.
"For thee, the name thou bear'st, thy grandsire Jove,
"Were else sufficient plea. Waste thou in suit
"Nor time nor words: look round thee on our land!
"Choose where thou wilt:—'tis thine. I would thy choice
"Were of a happier soil!"—He said, and wept.
Much marvelling, Peleus and his train besought
That sorrow's cause. "Ye think perchance"—he said—
"Yon Hawk, the swooping spoiler of the skies,
"That scares all fowl, was ever feathered thus:—
"Whilome that bird was Man! Bold then as now,
"Impetuous, fierce in war, and for all deeds
"Of violence apt, Dædalion, like myself
"Sprung of that starry Sire, who from her couch
"Aurora wakes and latest quits the skies.
"For me, my joy is Peace, Peace beautiful
"With wedlock bliss and happy hearth and home:—

" His sole delight was War. Ye see him chase
" Yon scattering doves?—So erst he chased his kind,
" And Kings and Peoples trembled where he came.
" One Daughter had he, Chione, a prize
" Of thousand suitors sought, and passing fair
" With all the budding charms of years twice seven.
" Phœbus and Hermes, as it fell, chance-met,—
" (This from Cyllenius, that from Delphos bound,—)
" Together saw the Maid, and burned alike
" To win. The Day-God till the night deferred
" His amorous attack:—the hotter Son
" Of Maia with his soporific wand,
" Impatient, touched the Maiden's lips, and lulled
" In magic slumber forced her as she slept.
" Later, when midnight spangled Heaven with stars,
" Came Phœbus, and in beldame's form disguised
" Her chamber won, and snatched a bliss forestalled.
" Maturing months rolled on, and in due time
" Twins bore she to the twain:—to Mercury
" Autolycus, in every trick and wile
" Expert, and subtle with his Father's craft
" To make or white seem black or black seem white:—
" Philammon to Apollo, wide renowned
" For sweetest song and softest touch of lyre.
" That double motherhood,—that double love
" Of Gods,—her Father's fame and lineage traced
" Third from great Jove himself,—what blessing came
" Of these?—To her, as erst to many else,
" Her glory was her bane:—She dared dispute
" With Heaven the palm of beauty, and decry
" Diana's self for over-rated charms.

" Direful and deadly woke the Goddess' wrath:—
" 'My face not pleases thee!' she said—'my hand
" 'Perchance may please thee better!' And her bow
" She bent, and loosed a shaft that through the tongue
" The boaster pierced!—Word spake she never more,
" But with convulsive effort, choked with blood,
" Struggled for speech, and vainly struggling died.
" I, quelling for my Niece's hapless fate
" My proper sorrow, strove—alas! in vain—
" My brother to console. As hears the rock
" The murmur of the fretting wave, he heard
" My idle comfort; prone, with piteous wail
" Clasping his slaughtered child: and when the pyre
" Was kindled, thrice and once he rushed to fling
" Himself amid the flames, and thrice and once
" Repulsed, with sudden bound—as maddened leaps
" Some heifer hornet-stung—he turned and fled!
" Right up Parnassus' side, where path was none,
" He sped:—(even then, methought, his feet had wings,
" Such more than human swiftness left behind
" Our slow pursuit:—) and from its topmost peak
" Sprang headlong, bent on Death! Apollo saw
" The leap, and pitying, light with sudden wings
" In middle air upheld him, to a bird
" Transformed with curving beak and hookèd claws.
" Bold as of yore, and strong beyond his size,
" Rapacious, merciless, a Hawk he soars,
" The terror of the feathered race, and fills
" The orphaned skies with sorrow like his own!"

IX. So ended scarce the Son of Lucifer

His brother's wondrous tale, when, hot with haste
And breathless, in the hall Anetor burst,
The Phocian guardian of the Exile's herd :—
" O Peleus! Peleus!" gasped he—" terrible news
" I bring thee of disaster!"—" Speak it out,
" Whate'er it be!" the Hero said :—the Lord
Of Trachis anxious bent to hear the tale.
" What time the Sun—he said—in midmost Heaven
" Looked back and forward o'er an equal space,
" Down to the shore thy way-worn herds I drove.
" Some, on the sands for very weariness
" Reposed gazed placid o'er the watery plain :—
" Some wandered here and there :—some stronger plunged
" In the refreshing flood, their horny brows
" Alone above the surface visible.
" Not inland far an antique Temple flings
" Its shadow on the wave :—nor gay with gold
" Nor fair with marble, on primæval trunks
" Of some old forest pillared, consecrate—
" (So said at least a Fisher on the beach
" That in the noontide spread his nets to dry—)
" To Nereus and his Nymphs. A willow-copse
" Marshy with refuse of the ebbing flood
" Fringes the shore. A Wolf of monstrous size
" Within hath made his den, and terrible
" With hideous howling frights the neighbour fields.
" Sudden, his ravenous jaws with foam and blood
" Be-sprent, red lightning flashing from his eyes,
" Hungry and furious sprang he from his lair,
" But furious more than hungry;—what he seized
" He stayed not to devour, but all around

" O'erthrown and mangled strewed the worried kine,
" And of my helpers two or three, their charge
" Defending, tore and slew. The rippling tide
" Was fringed with crimson, and the echoing shore
" Rang with the bellowings of the frightened herd.
" But rouse thee! linger not! each moment swells
" Thy damage:—arm thy following, and, while yet
" A remnant rests to save, with gathered force
" Assail we all the foe!"—He said:—but less
Recked Peleus of the loss than of its cause:—
His conscious guilt in that calamity
The vengeance of the orphaned Nereid knew,
Appeasing so with funeral sacrifice
Her murdered Phocus' Shade. Loud on his train
Called Ceyx—" Arm! arm all! and follow me!"
And straight had led them forth:—when, from her bower
Roused by the sudden tumult, terror-pale,
In presence rushed Alcyone, his Queen,—
Her streaming tresses o'er her shoulders flung
Loose from the unfinished braid,—and clinging round
His neck, with passionate tear and prayer besought
Him send some other leader, nor himself
Too rashly venturous risk two lives in one!
To whom Œacides:—" Calm, fairest Queen,
" These fears that well become thy wifely love!
" Enough thy husband's ready-proffered aid
" Binds me to thanks;—but not in arms I meet
" This foe:—not force but prayer must pacify
" The Ocean's angry Gods!"——A Tower was near,
Whose beacon-flame far blazing o'er the Seas
Safe homeward guided many a weary sail:—

There mounting, sadly on his slaughtered herd
He gazed, where yet the spoiler, red with gore
From jaw to tail, made havoc,—and his hands
Spread seaward, and to injured Psamathe
For pardon and for respite prayed, and prayed
In vain, till Thetis, with her husband's prayers
Blending her own, the Nymph's forgiveness won;
And while the monster, in his bloody feast
Yet revelling, in a heifer's mangled neck
His fangs had fastened, smote him into stone!
Shape, size, save colour all remained:—the hue
Of marble only shewed the brute was now
No more a wolf, nor longer to be feared.
But in that realm long resting-place the Fates
To Peleus not allowed. To Thessaly
And the Magnesian plains the Exile bent
His wandering steps:—and there with lustral rite
Acastus purged the fratricidal stain.

X. But Ceyx, by his brother's wondrous fate
Perplexed and that new marvel late ensued,
For counsel of the sacred Oracles
That comfort mortal doubt, the Clarian God
Resolved to seek:—for with his Phlegyan hordes
Phorbas to Delphos dangerous made the way:—
But first his loving spouse, Alcyone,
Made partner of his project. Chilled at heart
With terror, pale as boxen-leaf, in tears
Dissolved she heard him;—thrice she strove for speech,
And thrice in weeping drowned it,—then at last
Broken with sobs her fond sad protest made:—

"Ah Ceyx! dearest Lord! What fault of mine
"Hath so estranged the loving tenderness
"Thou once did'st bear me, that Alcyone
"Thus unconcerned thou leavest, and alone
"This long and perilous voyage dar'st essay?
"Alone—perchance so happier—not with me!
"Go then;—but safe—methinks thou may'st—by land!
"Leave me to sorrow only, not to fear:—
"Let grief at least lack terror. 'Tis the Sea
"I dread,—yon dismal Deep whose very thought
"Appals me. Yesterday I saw its shores
"Heaped high with wreck. I shudder as I pass
"Those frequent corseless cenotaphs engraved
"With names of drownèd men! Ah! think not thou
"The more to 'scape that in his dungeon-caves
"Hippotades, my Sire, hath power to chain
"The winds and calm the waters at his will:—
"Unloose them once, and all is theirs! Alike,
"Abandoned to their fury, Sea and Land
"They sweep, and vexing Heaven itself with shock
"Strike the red lightning from the clashing clouds.
"Long since, a child within my Father's halls,
"I learned to know them, and, the more I knew,
"The more to dread.—Can nothing move thy soul?—
"Art thou still fixed to go?—Then, dearest Lord,
"Share we the danger:—let me go with thee:—
"So shall I fear at least but what I see,
"Nor quake at fancied perils:—side by side
"Bear we what comes, and o'er the seas be borne!"
So, weeping, she entreated; nor unmoved
Her star-born Husband heard, nor grieving less

To part than she; but, obstinate bent to take
By sea his purposed way, and resolute
Alone to dare the danger, nor expose
His spouse to peril, with all argument
Of comfort strove, and reason, urged in vain,
Her timid soul to cheer, till from her love
One plea at last, consent reluctant won.
"To me too, as to thee, too long will seem
"Each hour that holds us parted! but, so Fate
"Not hinders, by my Father's fires I swear,
"Ere twice yon Moon her perfect orb completes
"Again I will be here!"—and, soothing so
With hope and frequent pledge of quick return
Her terrors, bade his sailors to the beach
His galley haul, and, with all needful gear
Of store and tackle fitted, launch to sea.
She saw, and, at the sight renewed, her fears
Prophetic shook her:—weeping, round her Lord
With many a wild embrace and kiss she clung,
And, scarce for utter misery faltering forth
The last "Farewell," sank swooning on the strand.
And Ceyx yet had lingered,—but by this
Aboard the lusty rowers double-ranked
Bent to their oars, and with well-ordered stroke
The seething billows furrowed. Then, too late
Revived, she rose, and through a mist of tears
High on the poop beheld her husband stand
Waving fond gesture of farewell, and waved
Her sad reply:—and as the distance dimmed
His features, followed still with straining gaze
The lessening hull, and, when the hull was lost,

The sails yet visible flapping from the mast,
Till faded all alike:—then heavily
Her chamber sought, and on her vacant couch
Forlorn down flung her, so but minded more
Of what that couch and what that chamber lacked,
And more dissolved in weeping. Far away
Now in mid-sea the galley rode; the breeze
Amid the cordage whistled shrill; the oars
No longer needed idle by the side
Were hung;—the yards braced top-mast high;—all breadth
Of canvas set to catch the favouring gale.
Nigh midway on her course the good ship sped
Far now from either port:—when, as the night
Fell round her, whitening all the waves with foam
In sudden squall raved Eurus. Loudly rang
The master's shout—"Aloft, men! strike all sail!
"Furl close!" Amid the roar of wind and wave
Inaudible he shouted;—but the crew
Unbidden to their duty sprang:—the oars
These shipped,—the bulwarks these made fast,—these loosed
Below the flapping sails, and these aloft
Furled to the yards,—this baled the streaming deck,
And back to Ocean gave his proper flood.
So as confused they toiled, more fiercely raged
The tempest's wrath; each warring wind of Heaven
Let loose to madness lashed the foaming Seas.
Helpless and paralysed the master stood,
Nor knew himself, nor knew his course, nor what
To order, what forbid;—all nerve, all skill,
In utter terror lost, and in the din
Bewildered of the shouting crew, the creak

Of straining shroud and plank, the roar of waves
Below, and thunder of the Heavens above.
Billow on billow surging mountainous
Confounded sky and sea, the very clouds
Drenching with brine, now yellow thick with sand
Stirred from the fathomless depths, now dark with dye
Black as of Styx, now white with sheeting foam.
With answering change the bark of Trachis fared:—
Now, high to Heaven on some huge roller's ridge
Upheaved, as from a mountain-top she saw
Below her, like the very pit of Hell,
The ocean-valley yawn;—now, in the trough
Deep-pent below the over-arching flood,
As though from nethermost Hell looked up to Heaven.
As when War's shattering engines on the walls
Of some doomed fortress thunder shock on shock,
The resonant billows lashed her groaning sides!
Wild as the hunted Lion, when at bay
Desperate against the circling spears he hurls
His headlong bulk,—so leaped with fierce assault
Upon the ship the tempest-maddened waves,
All fence of bulwark topping. Bolt and plank
Started o'er-strained; and through the yawning seams,
Reft of their pitchy compact, rushed the flood.
And lo! the clouds their sluices oped and loosed
New deluge:—seemed it now as on the Sea
All Heaven descended, now as to the Skies
All Ocean swelling mounted;—flood with flood
Upper and nether, meeting, blending, drenched
The streaming bark. No fire of friendly star
In all the welkin gleamed; above, around,

Darkness and Tempest leagued made double night,—
Unbroken gloom,—save when with fitful flash
The lightning for a moment seemed to set
The very waves a-flame. And now the Surge
Swept bodily o'er the ship. As, in the storm
Of some beleaguered city, towering high
O'er all the rest, himself a host, the attack
One stalwart warrior leads, and, oft-repulsed
But sworn to win the glory of the day,
Surmounts the breach and with his single arm
Sweeps way for following thousands,—so, the host
Of eager billows battering at her sides
O'ertopping, awful, vast, the Decuman-wave
Rushed to the assault, and to her very hold
Swooping in fatal cataract, stormed and sacked
The citadel of the spent and yielding bark.
Within triumphant, mad without to share
The triumph, roared the waters. All the ship
Shook like some trembling town, when half the siege
Within swarms master through her streets, and half,
Without persistent mines her tottering walls.
Skill, courage, hope, were lost:—on every surge
Seemed imminent Death to ride. One weeping stood,—
One paralysed with terror:—this begrudged
The happier fate of those who die ashore
With decent rite entombed:—this spread his hands
Imploring to the Heavens he could not see,
And with vain prayer for pity and for help
Besought the unhearing Gods. All memories
Of home, and kindred, sire, and wife, and pledge
Of wedded love, whatever each had left

Of dearest, thronged on each. In Ceyx' soul
Is but one thought,—upon his lips one name,—
Alcyone, but late for absence mourned,
In absence now his comfort. Fain his eyes
To Trachis yet would turn and fix on home
Their latest gaze;—but where lies Trachis now
Alas! he knows not;—with such madness boils
The blinding sea, such double night of storm
And pitchy cloud obscures the guiding skies.
Now crashing in the tempest's swirl the mast
Goes by the board,—the shattered rudder parts!
High revels o'er its spoil the conquering surge,
As scornful of the meaner waves that heave
And curl below:—and,—with no lighter shock
Than if, uprooted from its base, the mass
Of Pindus or of Ossa, giant-hurled,
Fell sheer in middle-sea,—in cataract
Enormous plunging, many a fathom deep
Whelms the o'er-weighted galley! Sucked adown
In the fierce whirl of waters, never more
To rise, sank most. Amid the stronger few,
On spars and tossing fragments of the wreck
Sustained, yet floated Ceyx:—he who late
A sceptre grasped was fain to clutch an oar,
Gasping for help to Sire and Sire-in-law,
Appeal, alas! unheard. But more than all
One name was on the swimmer's lips, one thought,
One memory at his heart,—Alcyone,
His wife! "Ah yet"—so prays he—"may those
waves
"Waft to her sight his corse, where friendly hands

"With pious sepulture may tomb his bones!"
"Alcyone!" at every breathing-space
Rings wailing o'er the waters! And, as curved
In black tremendous arch, one giant-wave
Breaks fatal, whelming deep the hapless head
Never again to rise, "Alcyone!"
In stifled murmur bubbles through the flood.
Darkling that night, and all unlike himself,
Forbid to quiet the skies, lay Lucifer,
And veiled in densest clouds his sorrowing head.
Ignorant meanwhile of all her woe, the child
Of Æolus was counting days and nights,
Whiled with fond labours of the loom to grace
Her Lord returned, to deck her own fair form
For that sweet hour of welcome,—ne'er to come!
With pious incense, heaped on every shrine
Of Gods, but most on Juno's, for the spouse
No longer hers,—"Oh! speed him safe!" she prayed,
"Nor only safe, but true,—mine still, all mine,
"By no allurement won of foreign charms
"To hold some other dearer!"—Witless how
Of all her vows that last alone was heard!
Such urgent suit for one past help of prayer
Juno not longer bore, and, glad to free
Her shrine from touch of those death-tainted hands,
To Iris called:—"Go! trustiest messenger,"
She said—"and quick to Somnus' drowsy halls
"Speed thee, and bid him show Alcyone
"Her drownèd Ceyx' image, and in dreams
"Tell her the truth." She spake, and Iris donned
Her robe of thousand colours, and, through Heaven

Arching her radiant journey, sought the rock
That shades the dwelling of the Lord of Sleep.
Fast by Cimmeria's bounds the torpid home
Of Somnus stands :—a cavernous hollow scooped
Deep in a mountain-side, where never ray
Of morn, or noon, or eve, with cheerful gleam
Of sunlight finds an entrance :—mist and fog
From the dank soil upsteaming load the air,
And all the spot a doubtful twilight shrouds.
Never the crested bird of morn awakes
Aurora from her couch :—no watch-dog there,—
Or goose, more wakeful than the watch-dog's self,—
The silence breaks:—no beast, or wild or tame,
No wind-stirred forest-branch, no interchange
Of human speech the dumb dead quiet mars,
Unbroken, save where from the mountain's base
A rivulet, of Lethæan virtue, purls
With tinkling murmur o'er a pebbly bed,
Inviting more to sleep. The threshold glowed
With scarlet wealth of poppies, and all herbs
Of sap to brew the slumberous charms that Night
Extracting sprinkles o'er the day-worn World.
No door in all the house to vex the ear
With creaking hinge:—no guard, no lock, no bar
To entrance. In the cavern's midst, reposed
On lofty couch of ebon, piled with down
Of black accordant plumage, sable-draped,
His limbs relaxed in slumber, lay the God.
Phantastic in a thousand mimic forms,
Countless as ears in harvest-time, or leaves
In summer-woods, or sands on ocean's shore,

Around him couched his subject host of Dreams.
Light o'er the threshold stepped the Herald-Maid,
And, from her radiant mantle as she passed
Flashing strange glory through the sacred gloom,
Shook from his torpid trance the snoring God.
His heavy lids with effort raised,—his chin
With frequent lapse yet nodding to his breast,—
The struggling sleeper roused at last, and reared
Upon his elbow saw and knew his Guest,
And questioned why she came:—to whom the Maid—
"Somnus, creation's rest! Somnus, of Gods
"Benignest Power! Peace-giver! Banisher
"Of Care, whose balm the force of Labour's limbs
"O'erworn refreshes for the morrow's toil,—
"Send thou some Dream whose unsubstantial form
"May lifelike semblance wear, and in the shape
"Of Ceyx visit Trachis' slumbering Queen
"Alcyone, and to her sense present
"The picture of the wreck that widowed her:—
"'Tis Juno claims the service!"—And, her hest
Delivered so, she turned, nor more endured
The cave's narcotic influence, stealing fast
O'er slackening nerve and limb:—and to the skies
Retraced the arch that bridged her downward way.
Straight, from his host of thousand sons, the Sire
Of Dreams wakes Morpheus,—readiest to assume
What form he will, deftest to simulate
Feature, and voice, and gesture, wonted garb
And wonted phrase:—No shape, save that of Man,
He takes:—inferior semblance, beast or bird
Or trailing serpent, 'tis another's charge

To wear, whom Gods call Icelus, and men
Phobetor:—third in rank comes Phantasus:
A clod, a rock, a wave, a tree, whate'er
Lacks life and soul, he seems. These three are they
Who haunt by night the couch of Chiefs and Kings,
While meaner ministers by meaner beds
Of vulgar sleepers flit:—whom overpassed,
Morpheus, of all his brethren deemed alone
Worthy Thaumantias' errand, calls the Sire
And sends:—then, languid on his pillow lapsed,
Seals up once more in sleep his weary eyes.
  Swift through the vast of darkness sped the Dream
On noiseless pinions borne, and in brief space
Hæmonia reaching, laid his wings aside
And took the form of Ceyx. Deathly-pale,
As all his blood were drained, a naked Ghost
Beside the hapless widow's couch he stood.
Dank with the briny ooze his tangled beard
And locks seemed dripping yet, and down his cheeks
Rolled tears in stream profuse, as o'er the bed
He bent and spoke:—"Ah! miserable wife!
"Dost know me?—or can Death have wrought such change
"In form and feature that Alcyone
"Not recognises Ceyx?—Look on me,
"And for thy husband see thy husband's Shade!
"No help, Alcyone, was in thy prayers!
"Lost am I, dead! No longer cheat thy heart
"With promise of my coming! Deep adown
"By cloudy Auster's fury wrecked and whelmed
"Beneath the mid Ægean lies my bark!
"The salt sea chokes the lips whose last vain cry

" Was on thy name!—No doubtful messenger
" I come:—no questionable tale, o'ercharged
" By vague report, thy credence claims:—Myself,
" Thy very drownèd spouse, in presence here
" I stand, to tell my wreck. Wake! give me tears!
" Don robes of woe! nor let my tombless Ghost
" To empty Tartarus flit undeplored!"
So, with the very trick of Ceyx' voice
And Ceyx' speaking-gesture, Morpheus spake,
Vouching his tale with flood of truth-like tears.
Moaning and sobbing yet in troubled trance
Of slumber lay Alcyone;—her arms,
Outspread to clasp the disappearing form,
Embracing empty air:—" Stay, Ceyx, stay!"
She cries—" Ah! whither would'st thou fly? We go
" Together, thou and I!" And so, disturbed
By terror of the vision and the sound
Of her own voice, whereat the household train
Alarmed with lamp and torch the chamber throng,
Starts from her sleep, and eager looks around
For him whom now she seemed to see, and finds
No sign, no trace,—all vacant. Then she beats
Her cheeks, and from her bosom rends the lawn
To bruise her whiter breast, and from her locks
Loosed in disordered tangle reckless tears
The snood, and to the foster-nurse, that asks
What sudden grief thus passionate shakes her child,
Shrieks frantic answer:—" Child?—Thou hast no child!
" Alcyone is dead! dead with her Lord,
" Her Ceyx!—Spare your comfort! Ceyx lies
" Shipwrecked and drowned! But now I saw him,—saw

"And knew,—and with imploring arms besought
"His vanishing form to stay:—his Shade! for Shade
"It was too manifest—my very Lord
"And husband!—though his features lacked their cheer
"Familiar and all play and light of life.
"Naked and pale, his dank locks dripping yet
"With brine—unhappy! on this very spot
"I saw him weeping stand!"—and round she looks
As though some trace of what she saw but now
She yet might see:—"This, this was what my soul
"Presaging dreaded, when my prayers in vain
"Besought thee stay, nor tempt the winds and waves!
"Bound as thou wert to death, thou should'st at least
"Have let me share thy voyage!—Happier so,
"Still with thee, still beside thee, what of life
"Remained at least I so had lived with thee,
"And with thee died together!—Absent now
"I perish:—absent toss upon the waves:—
"Myself disparted from my better self
"I drown!—More cruel than yon Sea my soul
"Could I yet longer cling to life, or strive
"And wrestle with such sorrow! In such strife
"No wrestler I! Not thus, belovèd! thus
"I leave thee! Thine, to share thy fate I come!
"One monument,—if not one common urn
"Receives us,—yet may rise:—one Epitaph
"Unite us yet; and, if our bones must lie
"Apart, at least for ever link our names!"
Grief choked her further utterance, and the wail,
Heart-broken, died in sob and moan and sigh.
But with the morn she sought the shore, and sad

Where erst she watched his galley's lessening hull
She stood:—'Twas here he lingered:—hence he loosed
Seaward his bark:—here on her lips was pressed
His last fond parting kiss:—each act, each word,
Memory recalled:—when, o'er the watery waste
Something—she knew not what,—but human-like
In outline, floating in the distance, caught
Her gaze, unrecognised,—but as the tide
Nearer and nearer wafted it, a corse
Beyond all doubt perceived:—some shipwrecked man,
Some stranger drowned:—and, by the omen moved,
"Alas!" she sighed—"for thee and for thy wife,
"If any called thee husband!" Shoreward still
The waters bore it; and, as closer now
She looked, with sudden shock of doubt her sense
Reeled well-nigh into madness! Now it touched
Almost the port—known—unmistakable!
'Twas Ceyx! 'twas her Lord! "'Tis he!" she shrieks,—
Cheeks, tresses, vest, she tears, and to the corse
Her tremulous hands outspreading—"Dost thou come
"Thus, O my loved lost husband, to thy wife?"
She cries—"Unhappy! dost thou so return?"
Hard by, a mole there stood whose masonry,
Stemming the first fierce onset of the waves,
To calmer entrance quelled the wearied flood:—
High on its mound—'twas marvel how she could—
She sprang, and headlong flung herself, and flew
A Bird, with sudden wings that winnowed light
The air, and skimmed the surface of the deep,
And ever in its flight shrill manifest note
Of sorrow twittered from a slender beak;—

And, 'lighting on the dumb and pallid corse,
Strove with her new-made wings to fold and warm
The limbs beloved, and on the bloodless lips
Fond frigid billing kisses seemed to press.
Did Ceyx feel them, or the heaving flood
But seem to raise the answering head to meet
Their touch,—men doubted; but beyond all doubt
He felt them:—and the pity of the Gods
Too late awakened gave them equal fate
At last, and both alike to birds transformed.
Fond as of yore, still linked in that new shape
By the same bond of conjugal love, they pair,
And breed: and, in the Winter's sunnier calm,
Seven days and nights upon her floating nest
Alcyone sits brooding. Fearless then
Launches his bark the Sailor. Æolus
Fast in their caverns locks the prisoned winds,
And for his daughter's children smooths the Seas.

XI. These, as they skim the waves, some thoughtful Sire
Observing, bids his friend observe, and lauds
Their constant love:—"Mark too"—he says, or hears
Perchance in answer,—"yonder Cormorant,
"That diver, slim of shank, and broad of throat:—
"His birth was royal too. Car'st thou to trace
"His line of Sires?—For ancestors he boasts
"The sons of Tros, Ilus, Assaracus
"And Ganymedes, rapt of Jove to Heaven,
"Laomedon the old, and Priamus,
"Last Lord of falling Troy. Yes, yonder bird
"Was Hector's brother,—might perchance have won

" As great a name as Hector, had not Fate
" In youth's first bloom a stranger doom assigned;
" Though, 'sooth, a nobler Mother, Dymas' child,
" Gave Hector birth:—this Æsacus a Nymph,
" Granicus' daughter, Alexirrhoë,
" In secret, under Ida's leafy slopes,
" To Priam bore. Cities and pomp of Courts
" He hated, rarely 'mid the bustle seen
" And throng of Troy, more pleased with peaceful haunt
" Of secret hills and unambitious fields:
" Yet no rough rustic, from whose churlish breast
" Young Cupid's darts fell blunted. In the woods
" The youth had followed oft Cebrenus' child
" Hesperie,—and beside her Father's banks
" Caught her, as o'er her shoulders flung profuse
" She dried her new-bathed tresses in the Sun.
" Like startled doe that sudden sees the wolf,—
" Like wild-duck far from shelter of the pool
" 'Ware of the hovering hawk,—upsprang the Nymph
" And fled, the boy pursuing. Terror urged
" To utmost speed the maiden, Love the youth.
" When lo! chance-trodden as she ran, a snake
" Bit her, and left his poison in her heel,
" Flight, Life, at once arresting. On the corse
" The boy in anguish flung himself:—'Ah! why'—
" Piteous he wailed—'why did I follow thee?
" 'I looked not for this end! Too dearly costs
" 'This conquest! We have slain thee! we, we twain!
" 'This snake the means and I the cursèd cause!
" 'More guilty I than he, if by my death
" 'I pay thee not thine own! Such recompense

" 'At least is mine to offer thee!' He spoke,
" And headlong from a rock, whose arch o'erhung
" The undermining waters, flung himself.
" But pitying Tethys broke his fall, and buoyed
" Upon sustaining pinions held him up
" Above her waves, and barred the purposed death.
" So to be saved indignant, thwarted so
" Of riddance of the wretched life he longed
" To lose, with obstinate effort on the waves
" Again he dashed him, still despite himself
" By those new wings up-borne :—his plumes forbade
" To sink:—and furious, furious still in vain,
" With endless dip and plunge he strives to drown.
" His passion wastes him:—thin his knotted shank
" And thin the long lithe neck that far disparts
" Body from head. His haunt is still the Sea:—
" And still beneath the flood immersed, and still
" Emerging, Mergus is the name he bears."

THE

METAMORPHOSES

OF

PUBLIUS OVIDIUS NASO

BOOK XII.

THE METAMORPHOSES.

BOOK XII.

I. For dead, unwitting how he lived a bird,
King Priam wept his son: his cenotaph
Hector and all his brethren with vain rite
Of funeral honours reared. One only lacked
Amid the mourners,—Paris:—Paris, doomed,
For that stolen wife of Greece, his native Troy
To scathe with curse of long-protracted war.
A thousand barks the gathered levy bore
Of all Pelasgia's sons; nor long delayed
Had vengeance lingered, but the adverse winds
The ocean-pathway barred, and in the roads
Of Aulis, to Bœotian fishers dear,
Detained and idle held the fretting fleet.
There with ancestral homage as they sought
The shrine of Jove, as bright once more with flames
Too long extinct the ancient altars blazed,
Around a towering plane, that neighboured close
The sacred rite commenced, aghast they saw
A blue and speckled serpent twine, and climb

Where 'mid the leafy top a sparrow hatched
Her chicks twice four. These, and their dam,—too near
With woful twitter fluttering round her loss,—
Gorged in his greedy maw the Snake. The crowd
Astounded gazed. The Prophet-son alone
Of Thestor read the portent's secret sense,
And loud out-spoke—"Rejoice, Pelasgia's sons!
"We conquer! Troy is ours! though long the toil
"That wins the prize;"—and, from the nine slain birds
Foretold the nine ensuing years of siege:
When—farther marvel!—as he spoke, the Snake
Amid the green boughs gliding turned to stone,
And coiled a marble serpent round the tree!

II. Persistent Nereus lashed the Aonian waves
To wrath, and wind-bound held the idle fleet:—
Neptune, some deemed, was sworn to save the walls
Himself had helped to build. But not of these
Was Thestor's son;—he knew, nor spared to warn
What virgin-sacrifice must first appease
Offended Dian's ire: and public weal
O'ercame at last paternal love,—the King
Subdued the Sire,—and at the altar-stone
Ordained to redden with her innocent blood
Iphigenia knelt,—the very Priests
Around her drowned in tears. The Goddess' self
Was conquered. Sudden cloud the unfinished rite,
The chanting Priest, the praying multitude
O'ershadowed,—none knew rightly what ensued,—
But thence, so runs the tale, unseen the Maid
Was wafted, and a substituted hind

Bled victim in her place. So sank appeased
With meeter sacrifice Diana's wrath,
And, with it, Ocean's rage. More favouring winds
Filled bellying to the East a thousand sails,
And safely sped athwart the perilous seas
The fatal navy touched the Phrygian strand.
A spot there stands, central 'twixt Earth and Sea
And Sky, the navel of the triple World,
Whence all Creation to its utmost bound
Lies visible, and every issued voice
Pervading fills the universal air.
Upon that specular height her citadel
And palace Fame hath built. A thousand paths
Lead to her halls, a thousand porches, void
Of gate or barrier, day and night alike
Open, give entrance. Walls of resonant brass
The dwelling frame, and, vexed with ceaseless hum
And buzz confused of voices, echo back
Redoubled all they hear. No rest, no calm,
No silence, yet no din: a murmur low
And dull, as of the roar of Ocean heard
At distance, or Jove's thunder fainter-pealed
From the last cloud of some departing storm.
Legions of airy subjects throng the halls
Coming and going,—Rumours thousand-fold
Crowding and justling, mingled, false with true,
In wildering babble of confounded speech.
Some ever with fresh burden of report
Inventive load the empty air, and some
Dispersed the lying story bear abroad;
And still the tale with telling grows, and each

Repeating hearer adds to what he hears.
Rash-judging Error there, Credulity,
Too sanguine Triumph, over-abject Fear,
Sit inmates, and Sedition sudden-stirred,
And whispering Slander, born of dubious Sire.
And, over all, the Goddess' self enthroned
Whate'er in Earth or Sea or Sky is done
Beholds, and searches all the World for News.

III. Long since her warning voice the approaching war
Had noised in Troy. No unexpected foe
The Greekish navy came. Troy lined in arms
Her guarded shore. The first to leap to land,
The first to fall, foredoomed to Hector's spear
Protesilaus bled. At terrible cost
Her footing in that first-contested field
Greece won, by Hector's valour taught to own
That Troy had heroes too:—and Troy the worth
Of Grecian arms in bloody lesson learned.
Sigæum's strand was red with gore:—the Son
Of Neptune, Cygnus, with a thousand deaths
Had thinned the Grecian host, when through the ranks
Of Ilion, from his car with Pelian spear
Wide dealing death, Achilles crashed, and, chief
With Hector or with Cygnus hot to cope,
With Cygnus first encountered:—Hector's fall
To the long war's last year the Fates deferred.
Straight at the foe with shout and cheer he urged
His chariot's snowy steeds, and poising high
His brandished lance—"Whoe'er thou art"—he cried—
"Young Warrior! take this comfort of thy death,

"Achilles lays thee low!" And on the word
Followed the spear. The aim was true,—the point
Was sharp,—yet from the breast it struck recoiled,
Bruising alone, not wounding. Thetis' son
Astonished saw. "What marvel, Goddess-born,
"For well unnamed I knew thee"—Cygnus cried
Contemptuous—"that thy weapon draws no blood?
"This helm whose nodding horse-hair fans my brows,
"This shield whose bossy burden loads my arm,
"Are but mere warrior-trappings, borne for show,
"Not need. So Mars for ornament alone
"Superfluous harness wears. Strip me of all
"This idle casing, and invulnerable
"I front thee still:—of no mere Nereïd born,
"But of that mightier Sire who Nereus' self
"And all his Daughters rules and all the Seas!"
He spoke and at Pelides launched his spear:—
Full in his buckler's disc, through nine tough folds
Of bull-hide pierced the weapon, by the tenth
Barred farther way. Achilles wrenched it forth,
And back, for answer, whirled with giant force
His whizzing javelin, bootless urged. The foe
Unwounded stood, unharmed. Nor better fared
A third, though full-exposed Neptunus' son
Its shock endured, nor cared to shun the blow.
As in the Circus glares a Bull, provoked
By scarlet-vested puppets, dangling set
To tempt his headlong onset, mad to feel
His fury wasted on a senseless foe,
So chafed Pelides:—doubtingly he felt
His weapon's point,—perchance the shaft had lost

Its barb,—the steel was there:—"'Tis then this arm,"
He muttered, "is in fault! Its force, of old
"On many proved, on one at last is foiled!
"Yet erst it failed me not, when first I stormed
"Lyrnessus' walls,—or Tenedos,—or drenched
"With its defenders' blood Eëtion's Thebes,—
"Or when Cocytus crimson to the sea
"With slaughter rolled, and twice-touched Telephus
"The double virtue of my weapon proved.
"An hour ago—be witness yonder pile
"Of Trojan corses cumbering all the shore—
"It failed me not!—It shall not fail me now!"
He said, and, proving if that former force
Yet served him, at Menætes hurled his spear:—
Through breastplate pierced and breast, the Lycian smote
With rattling helm the Earth, and groaned, and died!
Hot from the corse he wrenched the steel:—"The same!"
He cried—"the same! nor hand nor javelin fails!
"Still as of old they conquer! Be this point
"Once more upon yon braggart tried, and Heaven
"Speed the same weapon with the same success!"
He said, and aimed unerring at the son
Of Neptune sped the spear:—the ashen shaft,
Unshunned, as from some wall of solid rock
From the left shoulder jarring fell repulsed!
Alone a stain of visible crimson left
Shewed where it struck. With triumph premature
Elate Pelides marked the seeming wound
That wound was none:—'twas but Menætes' blood
He saw, not Cygnus' own. Then from his car
Furious he sprang, and with his foe, secure
His headlong onset fronting, hand to hand

With flashing falchion closed. Through helm and shield
The good blade shore:—the harder skin beneath
Defied the blow and blunted turned the steel.
Then madly in the Trojan's face he dashed
The bootless weapon's hilt, and thrice and once
With stunning buffet of his buckler's boss
Smote him upon the brows, and, with the shock
Bewildered, dizzy, bore him back!—No pause,—
No moment's space for breathing,—shout and blow
What sense was left confounded:—terror seized
His soul and darkness swam before his eyes!
Right on a jutting boulder, that unseen
Behind him barred the way, Pelides drove
The backward-yielding foe, and, as he reeled,
With force gigantic grappling, hurled to Earth
Supine, and on his chest with stifling weight
Of knee and buckler pressing, held him down.
Fierce from the battered helm the thong he tore,
And tight below his chin, with strangling noose
Compressed, all issue choked of breath and life;—
And would have spoiled the corse:—but lo! a shell
Of empty arms was all his triumph found!
Cygnus had vanished,—by his Sea-God Sire
To that white bird transformed that bears his name!

IV. V. That battle fought—to neither resting host
Unwelcome came a truce of many days:—
Only on Trojan wall and Argive trench
Kept watch and ward the sleepless sentinels:—
And festal broke the morn when Peleus' son
At Pallas' shrine, for Cygnus overcome,
With sacrifice of heifer paid his thanks.

First-carven smoked the altar's share, with steam
Of grateful savour curling high to Heaven:
The rest the banquet spread. The Chiefs reclined
Circled the board, full-feasted: care and thirst
Fled equal-banished by the cheering bowl.
Nor minstrel-song, nor harp, nor boxen flute
They needed, tuneful drilled with various stop:—
Talk only wore the night,—and all its theme
Was Valour:—each of desperate contest told
Waged with some worthy foe; proud Memory waked
The perils dared, the triumphs won, of yore:
What else should Peleus' son for subject choose?
How else should Heroes talk with Peleus' son?—
But most the recent fate of Cygnus moved
Their marvelling comment:—how should mortal frame
Be gifted with such privilege to mock
The falchion's edge and turn the blunted spear?
That wonder with the rest Pelides shared:—
When Nestor thus:—"To you, belike, ye chiefs,
"Warriors of younger date, unmatchable,
"Unique, this prodigy appears,—this foe
"Careless and woundless of your keenest steel.
"For me, long years agone these eyes beheld
"Perrhæbian Cæneus, Cæneus, of the slopes
"Of Othrys' Lord, a thousand wounds at once
"Enduring, harmed of none! and, more to make
"The wonder, at his birth a woman born!"
Astounded at that greater miracle
At length his audience craved the tale, and thus
Pelides with the others,—"Tell it us,
"O old man eloquent, our Age's guide

" And oracle in counsel, for alike
" We burn to hear. What Father gave him birth,
" This Cæneus? Why transformed?—Upon what field
" Won he his fame? and by what stronger arm,
" If any, was he conquered?"—Then the Sire:—
" Old as ye see me, Princes, and of much
" Forgetful that my earlier prime beheld,
" Much can I yet remember, better naught
" Than this, of chance or change, at home, abroad,
" Peaceful, or warlike, witnessed. And, in sooth,
" If ever ampler years to mortal man
" Of chance and change gave ampler cognisance,
" That man am I, who past two centuries
" Full-counted live to enter on my third.—
" Of all Thessalia's maids the fairest far,
(" Compatriot-born, Pelides, with thyself,)
" Was Cænis, child of Elateus; through all
" Thy towns, and all the towns of neighbour states,
" Of many wooed, and wooed of all in vain.
" Thy very Sire perchance,—but that ere this
" His greater Goddess-bride was pledged or won,—
" A wife well worth the seeking there had sought.
" Be this as 't may, she wedded not. The God
" Of Ocean, wandering on the lonely shore—
" So runs the tale—surprised her, and by force
" Her charms enjoyed; and, raptured with the bliss
" Of that new conquest, bade her fearless speak
" What wish she would, and have it. 'Wrong so great'—
" She said—'demands proportioned recompense!
" 'Unsex me! nor of violence like this
" 'Hereafter leave me capable! I ask

"'Nor more nor less.' And as she spoke—so still
"The legend has it—masculine her voice
"In vigour swelled and tone:—the change was wrought!
"Cænis the maid was Cæneus now the man!
"The God had heard her, and this boon to boot
"Unsought bestowed, thenceforth invulnerable
"To dread nor edge of sword nor point of spear.
"Glad with that gift the changed one went his way,
"And, on the banks of Peneus trained to arms,
"'Mongst Heroes sought a Hero's place and fame.
"By this Ixion's son had won for wife
"Hippodame, and to the nuptial feast
"Invited came his cloud-born Centaur kin
"Half-horse, half-man. A vaulted cavern, cool
"With shade of neighbour boughs, gave fitting space,
"Elsewhere denied, to set the ample board.
"Hæmonia's chiefs were there, and there by chance
"Was I. Around from hall and palace rang
"The revel's mingled tumult,—roar of crowd,
"And minstrel-clang, and Hymenæal chant,
"On fume of smoking altars borne confused.
"Girt with a band of maids and matrons fair,
"Herself the fairest, more to grace our feast
"Came forth the Bride. 'Happy, thrice-happy thou,
"'Pirithous, in such consort!'—So we said,—
"Nor knew how near the greeting missed of truth,
"For scarce her sight had charmed us, when, inflamed
"By wine, or lust, or doubly fired by both,
"Of his rough brood the roughest, Eurytus
"Upsprang, before him dashing overthrown
"Banquet and board:—nor of his bestial kind

"Unfollowed. By her tresses seized he dragged
"The Bride,—the rest, as choice or chance allowed
"Made booty of her following. All the place
"Rang sudden, like a city sacked, with cry
"And shriek of women. But not long we gave
"That licence way. 'Ho! Centaur Eurytus!'—
"Theseus it was that spoke—'What madness prompts
"'This outrage? Know'st thou not, while Theseus lives,
"'Who wrongs the friend of Theseus, wrongs himself?'
"He said, and sweeping right and left the press
"Tore from the Centaur's grasp the rescued Bride.
"No word—(as how should words such act excuse?—)
"He spoke, but on the rescuer's face and breast
"With shower of blow and buffet rained reply.
"At hand it chanced an antique bowl there stood
"Rough with outstanding figures rudely carved:—
"The mighty mass with mightier strength upheaved
"Ægides seized, and at his enemy's face
"Whirled crashing:—Wine and blood and brain, confused,
"From mouth and wound in hideous torrent gushed:—
"Headlong he fell, and, rolled in mortal throe
"With hoofs convulsive beat the swimming floor.
"Mad at their brother's fate 'To arms! to arms!'
"His bi-form kindred shouted; wine to wrath
"Lent double fury; goblet, flask, and bowl
"The earliest missiles flew, from gentler use
"Of social peace profaned to wounds and war.
"Ophion's offspring, Amycus, was first
"The walls to spoil for weapons:—down he tore
"A pendent sconce with circling lights a-flame:—
"Aloft,—as o'er some white bull's victim-neck

"With axe up-swung at altar stands the Priest,—
"He poised it,—then at Lapith Celadon
"Full flung the branching weight:—the hero's face
"Was lost,—one huge contusion! With the shock
"Dislodged from either socket shot the eyes,
"And nose and jaw crashed mingled down his throat!
"But vengeful seized Pellæan Belates
"A trestle of the maple-board, and smote
"The slayer:—sputtering shower of teeth and blood
"Against the brawny bosom knocked the chin,
"And, headlong as he rolled, a second blow
"To Tartarus despatched him. On a shrine
"Beside him, smoking yet, a furious glance
"Cast Gryneus:—'What!' he shouted—'Lack we arms?
"'Use we what Heaven supplies us!' and uptorn
"Altar and fire together hurled amain
"Amid the Lapiths! Fraught with double death
"On Broteas and Orios crashed the mass,—
"Orios, of that sorceress Mycale
"The son, whose chanted spells had power to drag
"From Heaven the struggling Moon. 'An' if I find
"'A weapon, Centaur, dear that deed shall cost!'
"Evadius said,—and for a weapon found
"The branching antlers of a giant-stag
"Hung votive by some hunter on a pine.
"Dashed full in Gryneus' face the jaggèd points
"Pierced either orb of sight:—one mangled eye
"Rent from its bursten socket clogged the tines,
"One dangled gory in his clotted beard!
"Red from the blazing altar Rhætus seized
"A brand:—where thick the ruddy locks o'erhung

" Charaxus' dexter brow he dealt his blow:
" Like Autumn's crackling stubble touched with fire
" Flamed all his fell of hair:—and in the wound,
" Seared as it gushed, you heard the seething blood
" Bubble and fry, as when some sturdy smith
" White-hot the iron from the furnace draws,
" And in the cistern drowns the hissing bar.
" Furious with smart and burning, from his locks
" He dashed the fire, and, shoulder-high upheaved
" Tore from its place the threshold-stone,—a load
" Fitter for wain and team,—too vast to hurl,—
" Scarce with huge effort lifted ere its weight
" The lifter overpowered, and, toppling down,
" Crushed to the Earth the comrade at his side
" Too close, Comætes. Then a bitter laugh
" Laughed Rhætus—'Like your Champion be ye all!'
" He scoffed—'and to like purpose use your strength!'
" And thrice and once again the flaming mace
" He swung, and with fresh wound at every swing
" Deep buried in his brain the shattered skull.
" Evagrus, Dryas, Corythus, were next
" To feel his victor-fury:—Corythus,
" His cheek yet downy with the bloom of youth,
" First of the three. 'Fair triumph o'er a boy
" 'O'erthrown!' Evagrus said, and, as the taunt
" Was spoken, fierce the blazing mace was dashed
" Full on the speaker's lips, and speech and breath
" Choked in his throat. But not with like success
" On Dryas fared his onset:—double flushed
" With slaughter, round his head in flaming orb
" Whirling his brand, where neck and shoulder join

"Deep with the sharp point of a half-charred stake
"The Lapith pierced him, and, with howl of pain,
"Wrenching the weapon from the wound, and bathed
"In blood, he fled. Orneüs, Lycabas,
"Fled with him, Medon in his dexter flank
"Wounded, Pisenor, Thaumas, Mermeros,
("Erewhile of all the swiftest in the race,
"The slowest now with hurt,) and Melaneus,
"And Abas, terror of the hunted boar,
"And Pholus, and the Augur Astylos,
"Whose prescience vainly warned his tribe from war,
"And Nessus, turned to fly:—'Thou need'st not haste!'
"Quoth Astylos—'the bow of Hercules
"'Will serve thy turn hereafter!'—Lycidas
"Areos, Imbreus, and Eurynomus
"Escaped not though they fled,—all four the hand
"Of Dryas slew. Crenæus in his flight
"Had yet his wound in front:—back as he looked
"A moment, 'twixt the eyes, where nose and brow
"Unite, a whizzing javelin pierced his brain.
"Upon an Ossan bear-hide flung at length
"O'erpowered by copious draughts, of all that brawl
"Senseless, with nerveless fingers clutching yet
"A half-drained goblet, drowned in drunken sleep
"Aphidas lay. Him, supine as he snored
"Inert, nor boot to friend nor bane to foe,
"Marked Phorbas: 'Drunkard! let the Styx'—he cried—
"'Cool thy next cup!' and through his weasand drove
"The steel point of his ashen-shafted spear.
"Senseless of death he died; and from his throat

"O'erladen gushed the crimson flood and dyed
"His shaggy couch, and brimmed the bowl he held.
"Petræus too I saw, with giant force
"Striving from Earth to tear a sapling oak;
"But, as he grasped and swayed from side to side
"The yielding trunk, Pirithous' javelin pierced
"And nailed him to the tree that mocked his strength.
"By the same hand Lycus and Cromis fell,
"And nobler triumph gave two nobler foes
"Dictys and Helops,—keen from ear to ear
"Through Helops' brain the fateful javelin sped:—
"Adown a slope fled Dictys, and in flight
"Stumbled and fell, with all his headlong weight
"Crushing a mountain-ash, and self-impaled
"Upon the spiky splintered trunk he died!
"To venge his fate sprang Aphareus, and heaved
"A rock's huge fragment; but, or e'er his hand
"Had time to hurl it, Ægeus' son forestalled
"The cast, and with an oaken cudgel's blow,
"Dealt on the elbow, broke his dexter arm.
"So maimed, and careless if he lived or died,
"That foe he left, and huge Bianor's back
"With sudden vault bestrode, that never yet
"Bore other burden than his proper weight;
"And dug his sharp knees in the panting flanks,
"And grasping in his left the mane, he rained
"With that stout mace of knotted oak, on face
"And brow, a fatal shower of shattering blows.
"Nedymnus next the deadly weapon felled,—
"Lycotas, for his javelin's aim renowned,—
"And shaggy-bearded Hippasus,—the bulk

" Of Ripheus, topping with his giant head
" The woods he roved,—and Tereus, famed for strength
" To grapple with Thessalia's mountain-bears,
" And drag the struggling captives home alive.
" Chafing to mark that triumph's fierce career,
" From a dense clump of pines Demoleon strove
" Uptorn to heave a tree of secular growth;—
" The stubborn root defied him:—but the trunk,
" Snapped midway, furious at the foe he hurled.
" But warned by favouring Pallas,—so himself
" Averred,—aside the hero sprang and shunned
" The coming peril. Yet not all in vain
" The missile sped. Fatal, where chest and neck
" And shoulder meet, on Crantor crushed the weight,
" Thy Father's Squire, Achilles, whom in war
" Subdued Dolopia's King Amyntor sent
" To Thessaly in pledge of peace and faith.
" Whom stretched in death-pang of that cruel wound
" As Peleus saw—'At least thy fate shall lack
" 'No funeral sacrifice dear youth!' he cried,
" And at the Centaur, launched with all his force
" And all his soul, he whirled his ashen spear:—
" Keen through his ribs it pierced, and from his flank
" Outstanding quivered. Hardly from the wound
" He wrenched the shaft,—the buried barb within
" Defied his effort. Mad with rage and pain
" Upright he reared, and with his hoofs essayed
" To trample down his foe:—but on his shield
" And helm, unharmed, thy gallant Sire sustained
" His onset's clattering shock; and, with one thrust
" Tremendous of his steady-levelled spear,

"Pierced mortal through the shoulder to the heart,
"The double bulk of horse and man o'erthrew.
"Phlegræus, Hylas, earlier in the strife
"Had fallen, at distance by his javelin reached:—
"Hiphinoüs, Clanis, hand to hand had bled.
"The turn was next of Dorylas:—a hide
"Torn from the slaughtered wolf for helm he bore,
"And, weapon-like upon his forehead set
"And stained with blood, a wild bull's goring horns.
"Then,—all the soul within me roused to nerve
"My arm,—I shouted, 'Centaur! prove we now
"'Which weapon sharper pierces, lance or horn!'—
"And hurled my spear. Too sure too swift to shun
"He saw the coming blow, and, as his hand
"Uplifted sought to ward it, through his palm
"The javelin sped, and nailed it to his brow.
"Loud rang the Lapith shouts!—Disabled so
"And staggering with that grievous wound, the sword
"Of Peleus—for more near he stood than I—
"In the mid-belly smote him. From the rent
"Hideous the entrails gushed, and, on the ground
"Trailing his vitals, trampling what he trailed,
"And crushing what he trampled, all his legs
"In his own bowels hampered, prone he reeled
"Exenterate, and with empty belly died!
"Nor thee thy beauty Cyllarus availed,—
"For, if that hybrid nature e'er might claim
"The praise of beauty, beautiful thou wert!
"Golden his youthful beard,—his sunny locks
"Played golden on his shoulders:—health and strength
"Glowed in his cheeks. Neck, shoulder, chest, and arm,

" All that was Man, the Sculptor's art might choose
" For model;—nor less shapely in its kind
" The brute beneath;—a horse's head and neck
" Had perfected a steed for Castor's self,—
" So backed for knightly seat,—so on his chest
" The muscles swelled outstanding. Black his coat
" As ebon,—tail and legs alone were white.
" A thousand of his race's fairer sex
" For Cyllarus went sighing:—one alone
" Sighed not in vain:—Hylonome, of all
" The semi-savage tribe that haunts the woods
" The comeliest. With all gentle wooing ways
" Of Love, love honest, undisguised, avowed,
" She won and held him faithful. Not a grace
" That female art to such a shape could lend
" She lacked:—no locks were sleeker smoothed than hers,
" Or twined with fresher wreath of rosemary,
" Violet, or rose, or lily. Twice a-day
" In the clear fount of sylvan Pagasæ
" She laved her glowing cheeks, and twice a-day
" The river was her bath. The choicest furs
" The chase could furnish, draped in graceful fold,
" Bosom and shoulder mantled;—nor a robe
" She chose but lent her charms a charm the more.
" Both burned with equal flame:—inseparable
" They roamed the hills, or to the cavern's shade
" Retired; together to that Lapith board
" They came, and side by side contending died.
" I know not from whose hand, but leftward hurled
" The javelin sped that pierced thee, Cyllarus,

" A little wound, but heart-deep:—with the steel
" Withdrawn the death-damp chilled the fainting limbs.
" She saw him falling, caught him, strove to stanch
" With tenderest hand his wound, and to his lips,
" As though her kiss could stay the issuing soul,
" Pressed passionate her own; and when she knew
" The effort vain,—I know not what she said,
" For that surrounding tumult drowned the words,—
" But with a terrible shriek the fatal steel
" She seized, and in her bosom drove the point
" And fell, and flung around her husband's corse
" Her dying arms, and so embracing died.
" Phæocomes—methinks I see him yet—
" Six shaggy lion-hides with thong and knot
" Compact in one huge hauberk, cloaking man
" And beast alike, had donned. A giant stump
" That scarce two straining teams combined could draw
" At Phonolenus' son his hand had hurled,
" Wherewith the whole breadth of his arching skull
" Was crushed and shattered, and from eye, and ear,
" And mouth, and nostril, gushed the fluid brain,
" As from the oaken press ye see exude
" The curdled milk, or through the colander
" Spurts in a hundred jets the viscid whey.
" But, as he stooped to spoil his prostrate foe,
" Betwixt his ribs—thy Father saw the deed,—
" My blade I sheathed!—And by this sword of mine
" Fell Chthonius and Teleboas, one for arms
" Wielding a forky branch, and one a lance,
" Which last indeed I 'scaped not,—in this scar
" Yet visible Teleboas left his mark.

" Ah! had but Troy been in those days to win,
" This arm, as then it was, with Hector's self
" Might well have coped, and, if not conquered, held
" At least his force in check:—Vain boast! for then
" Was Hector yet not born, or still a babe:—
" And now, my strength is feeble as a child's.
" I spare ye longer tale, how Periphas
" Pyretus slew;—how Ampyx with a shaft
" Fatal though pointless cleft Oëclus' brow;—
" How with a stake young Macareus transfixed
" The breast of Erigdupus;—how the dart
" Of Centaur Nessus gored Cymelus' groin;—
" How Mopsus, not alone for prophet-lore
" Renowned, Odites smote, and, with his lance
" Fast nailing tongue to jaw and jaw to throat,
" Dismissed the struggling Centaur dumb to death.
" Five bi-form foes, Bromus, and Styphelus;
" Pyracmon, Helymus, Antimachus,
(" Number and names I know, but not their wounds,)
" By this had Cæneus slain. But furious forth
" Sprang Latreus, hugest far in body and limb
" Of all his kind:—from young Halesus' corse
" The spoils new-stripped had furnished him with arms.
" Midway 'twixt youth and age, with all youth's strength
" Yet unimpaired, the gray that streaked his locks
" Was faint as yet. Elate with helm and shield
" And Macedonian javelin, glancing proud
" At either host, around he pranced, and clashed
" His rattling arms, and to the empty air
" Shouted his challenge:—'What! shall women too
" ' Defy us?—for, to me a woman still,
" ' Cænis, thou art—not Cæneus!—Birth and sex

" 'Some fitter work should find thee! Hast forgot
" 'What price it was that paid this boasted boon?—
" 'What bargain bought this lying form of man?—
" 'How born, how shamed, remember!—Back, and ply
" 'Basket and distaff! Card, and reel, and spin!
" 'Home! and leave war to men!' So insolent
" He spoke:—the spear of Cæneus answered him:—
" Deep in his side, where horse and man unite,
" In mid career it pierced him. Mad with pain
" Full at the hero's face exposed he whirled
" His Macedonian lance. As from the roof
" Rebounds the hail,—or from a hollow drum
" The pattering pebble of some wanton child,
" The dart recoiled. Then hand to hand he closed,
" And with a sword-thrust tried his flank, and found
" No passage for the blade. 'Thou 'scap'st not thus!'
" He shouted—'If the point is blunt, the edge
" 'Shall reach thee yet!' and at his side, oblique,
" A trenchant stroke he dealt, and with a jar,
" As though some marble statue met his blow,
" Flew shivered to its very hilt the sword!
" 'Enough'—quoth Cæneus—'hast thou proved this form
" 'Invulnerable:—try we now if thine
" 'Resist as well!'—and to the hilt he plunged
" Beneath the shoulder-blade his deadly sword,
" And in his very vitals probing twirled
" The steel, and made an hundred wounds in one!
" With frantic outcry rushed his bi-form kind
" To venge him, with dense storm of spear and lance
" Hailed on one single head; but lance and spear
" Fell harmless all and blunted; and unhurt,
" Unscratched the hero mocked the hurtling shower.

" Amazed they saw the miracle:—' What shame
" ' Is this?' cried Monychus—a host by one
" ' Defied and baffled, and that one but half
" ' A man! or is *he* man, and *we* ourselves
" ' What once he was?—What boot of limbs like ours?
" ' Of double force? What use that in one form
" ' Nature hath blent the strongest twain that live?
" ' No Goddess was our Mother,—nor our Sire
" ' That Chief whose daring wooed the Queen of Heaven,—
" ' If thus we yield to this half-woman foe!
" ' Try we some other arms! Let rocks and stones
" ' Dash him to Earth! hurl mountains on his head!
" ' Heap all your forests over him! and crush
" ' And stifle out the life that mocks your steel!'
" He said, and, for example, seized a trunk,
" By the rude blast of Auster overthrown,
" And whirled:—and in a few brief moments cleared
" Othrys was bare and Pelion reft of shade!
" O'erwhelmed by that enormous mass, a while
" On his stout shoulders bearing up the weight,
" Panting stood Cæneus, but, as denser rose
" O'er head and mouth the heap, nor breathing-space
" Allowed him longer, fainting now, and now
" With desperate effort striving yet to heave
" The smothering wood and win his way to air,
" With such convulsive strain he shook the pile
" As when the Earthquake's subterranean force
" Rocks all the trembling woods on Ida's side.
" Doubtful his end:—some deemed that mighty weight
" Of piled-up forests pressed to Tartarus
" His sinking soul. The Son of Ampycus
" Averred that issuing from the pile he saw

"A bird of tawny plumage wing the air:—
"Myself such saw a moment, and no more:—
"But Mopsus watched it fearless o'er the ranks
"That held its friends in clamorous circle wheel,
"And knew, and knowing greeted:—'Hail!' he cried,
"'Chief glory of the Lapithæan race!
"'Peerless as man and peerless now as bird!'
"And on his warrant was the change believed.
"Then, doubly fired by sorrow to avenge
"One by so many foully done to death,
"We glutted grief with slaughter:—nor our swords
"Were sheathed till half the Centaur-brood was slain,
"And night and darkness helped the rest to fly."

VI. So as that tale of Centaur-Lapith strife
Old Nestor closed, Tlepolemus, aggrieved
To note no mention of Alcides' name,
Out-spoke;—"Grave Sire, methinks thy memory
"Of Hercules is short:—himself hath oft
"Told me how well he bore him in that fray."
To whom the Pylian, sighing,—"Wherefore wake
"A grief that long ago in lapsing years
"Had slept forgotten?—Why recall the days
"Of blood and wrong that made thy Sire my foe?—
"I know his deeds past credence,—own the world
"His debtor,—would I could that claim deny!
"But do we Grecians laud Deïphobus,
"Polydamas, or Hector?—Rarely men
"Are apt to praise the hand that works them woe.
"Thy Sire it was that levelled with the ground
"Messene's walls,—that sacked our guiltless towns
"Elis and Pylos,—that with fire and sword

"In ruin laid my home and household-Gods!
"Twelve—for I pass what other blood he shed—
"Twelve were we, Neleus' sons,—a gallant band
"Of brothers, and all twelve, save me alone,
"Thy Father slew! By such a foe o'ermatched
"No wonder that they fell:—yet passing strange
"The fate one met. To Periclymenus
"Neptune, the author of our race, the boon
"Had given, at will to wear what living form
"His fancy chose, at will resume his own.
"Of these a hundred trying for escape,
"At last the likeness of that bird he took,
"Favourite of Jove, that in his talons bears
"The thunderbolts;—and with an eagle's arms,
"Wing, beak, and claw, assailed the spoiler's face,—
"Then soared:—but high as 'mid the clouds he hung
"An arrow loosed from that too certain bow
"Struck him, where springs the pinion from the side,—
"No mighty wound, but hurt enough to break
"The nerve that gave his wing its motive play
"And power,—and down he toppled;—impotent
"And crippled through the air he could not beat
"To Earth he fell, and with his proper weight
"Drove deep the arrow lodged beneath his wing
"Through body and neck, till on his upper side
"Gleaming the point out-stood.—What eulogy,
"Think'st thou, fair Captain of the Rhodian fleet,
"Does Nestor owe this Hercules of thine?—
"I pass his deeds in silence:—so alone
"I wreak my vengeance for my brethren slain.
"For thee,—I know thy worth, and love thee well."
So calm and fair the Pylian made reply.

Once more the wine-cup circled:—then the Chiefs
From banquet rose, and night was given to sleep.

VII. But that great God whose trident rules the Seas
Yet wroth for Cygnus, like his namesake son
Of Sthenelus transfigured to a swan,
And bent on Peleus' hated son to wreak
His ancient grudge too unforgiving nursed,
Now in the tenth year of the lingering war
To Smintheus made appeal:—"Best-loved of all
"My Brother's Sons, whose labours joined with mine
"Reared yonder towers too soon ordained to fall,
"If aught their coming ruin sads thy soul,—
"If aught the thousands slain in their defence
"Touch thee,—if e'er the mute appealing Shade
"Of Hector, trailed unseemly round his walls,
"Be present to thine eyes,—my vengeance aid!
"For yet the fierce destroyer of our work,
"Achilles, lives, and fiercer grows with blood!
"Would in fair combat I could prove the force
"Of this my trident on him!—But not thus
"We two may meet. Thy bow may speed unseen
"A shaft, and smite the braggart unaware!"
Assenting Phœbus heard:—his Uncle's cause
Was his as well. Veiled in a robe of cloud
The Trojan host he sought, and 'mid the strife
Found Paris, careless dealing arrowy death
On meaner Greeks; and thus—the God confessed—
Bespoke him:—"Wherefore on these vulgar foes
"Thy quiver waste?—If Priam's son thou art,
"Aim yonder, and avenge thy brethren slain!"
And, pointing where Pelides heaped the field

With slaughtered Trojans, nerved the archer's arm
And sped the arrow deadly to its mark.
A deed that o'er his Hector's very bier
Might gladden Priam's heart!—Was this thy fate
Achilles, victor of a thousand fields?
This coward thief that stole a Grecian wife
Thy conqueror?—If the Fates thy fall ordained
To hand so like a woman's, better far
Penthesilea's Amazonian axe
Long since had by Thermodon laid thee low!
And now the dread of Troy, the boast and shield
Of Greece, the Chief that never in fair field
Found conqueror, was but ashes!—That same God
That armed consumed him! All that yet remained
Of the great son of Peleus scantly filled
One little urn! But yet his glory lives
And fills the world:—'tis by their fame alone
We measure Heroes, and, so measured, great
Achilles lives as ever! Tartarus
May shroud the Hero's Shade, but not his Fame.
His very shield—so proving whose it was—
Stirred quarrel o'er his tomb, and Chiefs in arms
Held contest for his armour. Claim so high
Not Diomed had boldness to prefer;—
Oïlean Ajax, Atreus' elder-born
And younger shrank alike. Laertes' son
And Telamonian Ajax only dared
Assert them worthy of so great a prize.
But Agamemnon's wiser sense declined
The invidious choice, and into Council called
The Chiefs, and bade the Rivals plead their claims,
And all the Assembly judge betwixt the twain.

THE

METAMORPHOSES

OF

PUBLIUS OVIDIUS NASO

BOOK XIII.

THE METAMORPHOSES.

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I. The Chiefs were set:—the host was ranged around:—
And first, the Master of the seven-fold shield,
Ajax uprose. Intemperate as he was
Of soul and speech, upon Sigæum's shore,
Where anchored rode the fleet, a glance of scorn
He cast, and seaward pointing—"Ye great Gods!"
He cried—"Before your ships ye judge this cause,
"And, with those ships in sight, Ulysses dares
"To stand my Rival! Where was he, when fierce
"With torch and brand raged Hector on the shore?
"'Twas I who saved them—I who drove him back!
"Safer it is to fight with words than arms!
"I am not quick of speech, nor he of act;
"Though strong of arm, methinks, as he of tongue,
"As many a field hath shown ye, where my deeds
"Yourselves have seen:—I need not count them o'er:—
"Let him tell his, whereof, I doubt, the most
"Can vouch no witness save himself and Night.
"'Tis no mean stake we play for—true:—but this,

" My rival, cheapens it! whate'er its worth
" Poor boast it is to me to bear away
" A prize that such as he may hope to win:—
" And for Ulysses more than praise enough
" That, beaten as he was, the world shall say
" He coped with Ajax!—For myself, if deeds
" Were lacked or valour doubtful, birth and race
" Speak trumpet-tongued:—my Sire was Telamon,
" That stormed with Hercules the walls of Troy,
" And sailed in Argo to the Colchian shores:—
" And Æacus was his, who o'er the Shades
" Sits Judge, where strains Æolian Sisyphus
" Against his lapsing stone. He claims for Sire
" Great Jove himself, nor Jove disowns his Son.
" So am I third from Jove. Nor such descent
" Here would I urge, but that in like degree
" Achilles stood:—one Grandsire his and mine:—
" And I, his kinsman, claim the rights of kin.
" What! must this brood of Sisyphus, in craft
" And wile and fraud the image of his Sire,
" Foist in the roll of us Æacidæ
" His upstart name?—Ye cannot dare deny
" These arms to me, the first to arms who sprang
" Unpressed, by no informer dragged to war,
" And give them to this craven, last of all
" At muster, feigning madness to escape
" A warrior's duty, till Naupliades
" Craftier than he—so to his sorrow proved—
" In evil hour the subterfuge exposed,
" And drove the dastard trembling to the field.
" Give him these arms! Be his the best, who none

"Had borne, unforced:—and as for me, who stood
"First in the front of danger, let me go
"Unhonoured, of my kindred rights debarred!
"I would to Heaven his madness had been true,
"Or so believed, nor ever as ally
"This plotter of all mischief sailed the Seas
"With us to Troy! So never, to our shame,
"Had Lemnos caged deserted Pæas' son,
"Whose moans, they say, amid her forests move
"The rocks;—whose curses, on Ulysses' head
"Heaped well-deserved, I pray the Gods fulfil!
"There our true comrade sworn, our Peer in field
"And council, heir to great Alcides' arms,
"Alas! a prey to famine and disease,
"For food and raiment on the tribes of air
"Expends the shafts that should have conquered Troy!
"Yet Lemnos from Ulysses sunders him,
"And so—he lives!—So Palamedes yet
"Had lived, had he been left,—or found at least
"A death unshamed with charge of traitorous guilt,
"Devised in vengeance for that coward feint
"Of madness erst exposed:—a lying tale
"Proved by a lying witness, that himself
"First hid the gold he found! So of its strength
"By death and exile twice he robbed our host.
"So fights Ulysses;—and such arms, I own,
"Men well may dread. But though his eloquence
"Surpass our Nestor's, ill for Nestor's self
"Deserted can his glozing find excuse,
"Whom, weak with age and by his courser's wound
"Delayed, this trusty comrade left unhelped

"Deaf to his call for aid. Tydides knows
"I lie not, for Tydides' self his friend
"By name recalled, and chid his shameful flight.
"Well,—to us men the Gods above are just:—
"Next 'tis himself whose peril asks the aid
"He gave not others. Had we left him there
"As he left Nestor, we had served him right!
"Himself had set us pattern.—But for help
"He bawls,—I fly to aid him,—and I find
"A trembling wretch that, white and paralysed
"With terror, waits an unresisted death!
"This buckler fenced his carcass as he lay,
"And saved—a worthless deed!—his worthless life.
"Wilt still pursue this contest?—Then 'twere fair
"We sought yon field again:—Give back the foe,
"The wound, the wonted terror! Lurk once more
"Behind my shield, and thence dispute thy claim!
"Gods! when that shield was lifted, he, whose hurt
"Not left him strength to stand, found speed enough
"To fly!—I swear no wound was in his legs!
"Lo! Hector comes, and with him all the Gods
"Of Troy to battle!—Braver men than thou
"Ulysses,—such the terror of his arm,—
"Might blench from charge like his!—That Hector, flushed
"With long career of slaughter, I it was
"That with a rock's vast weight at distance hurled
"Dashed to the ground! That Hector, when he braved
"Our best to duel, I it was that met!
"No Greek of all the host but prayed that Fate
"Might choose me Champion,—and the prayer was heard.
"'What issue?'—say ye—None for him to boast:—

"I fought unconquered. Mind ye yet the day
"When Troy, with fire and sword, and Jove to help,
"Swarmed round your fleet?—Where hid this words-man then?
"My breast alone it was whose bulwark fenced
"Your thousand galleys, saved your only hope
"Of Greece and Home!—For all those ships preserved
"Give me these arms! 'Tis no vain boast to say,
"More honour will it be for them than me:
"Their glory should be linked with mine:—the arms
"Want Ajax more than Ajax wants the arms!
"And now this Ithacus will gloze, forsooth,
"Of Rhesus butchered,—quaking Dolon snared,—
"And captive Helenus, the prophet-son
"Of Priam, with his Pallas filched from Troy!—
"Exploits of Night,—nor one in open day,
"Nor one attempted save when Tydeus' Son
"Was by to help!—If to such paltry feats
"These arms are due, why, part them fair, and give
"To Diomed the larger share he earned!
"What, if he won it, should our Ithacus
"Do with such prize, who wars but in the dark
"Unarmed,—who not by force but fraud subdues
"His unsuspecting enemy?—The blaze
"Of yonder morion's gold would but betray
"The ambush and reveal the lurking foe!
"Could that Dulichian head of his support
"The casque that helmed Achilles? Could those hands
"Unwarlike poise the weight of Pelion's spear?
"Should that vast shield, upon whose figured orb
"Stands wrought the image of the whole round world,

" Hang on a coward's arm, by Nature framed
" For theft, not war?—What folly bids thee seek
" This worse than useless prize?—If, sore misled,
" Greece held thy claim the better, of what boot
" Would be the boon?—To make thee robbed, not feared!
" Thy foes would spoil and mock thee! Or thy speed
" In flight—wherein above all living men
" I hold thee paramount, and there alone,—
" Would fail thee, weak with that heroic weight!
" See too—thy shield, in battle seldom borne,
" Is good as new:—Mine with a thousand dints
" Is hacked and bruised, and craves to be replaced.
" Enough of idle words! let hands not tongues
" Show what we are! Fling 'mid yon hostile ranks
" Our hero's armour:—bid us fetch it thence:—
" And be it his who first shall bring it back!"
So ceased the son of Telamon, and round
The circling host applausive murmur ran,
Hushed as Ulysses rose. With modest glance
Bent earthward for a while, slow-raised, he faced
His Peers, and, as the looked-for words flowed free,
Becoming gesture graced the eloquent speech.
" Had Heaven, O Princes, heard your vows and mine,
" This contest had been spared:—no doubtful heir
" These arms had waited:—thine they yet had been
" Achilles, and thyself had'st yet been ours!
" But, since less kindly Fate not wills it so,"
(And here across an eye that seemed to weep
His hand he drew,) " who rightlier should succeed
" Our great Achilles lost than he who gave
" To Greece the aid of great Achilles' arm?

" Count not in Ajax' favour that he seems
" The dullard that he is, nor hold the worse
" My title, for such wit as for your weal
" Was ever used;—nor let such fluency
" Of speech—I dare not call it eloquence—
" As, oft exerted in the cause of all,
" To-day must serve its master's, prejudice
" The claim it pleads. Let each man use unblamed
" What helping gifts he owns: but for our birth
" And ancestry,—the praise to which ourselves
" Contribute nothing,—scarce I call them ours.
" Though, 'sooth, if Ajax claim descent from Jove,
" So too may I, and in the same degree.
" Laertes, then Arcesius, and then Jove:—
" These were my Sires:—and, in that list, no name
" Is stained with blood or exile! Mercury
" Adds like distinction on my Mother's side,
" And either Parent links me with the Gods.
" Yet not for that a nobler womb it was
" That gave me birth,—not that my Father's hand
" Blushed with no brother's murder,—I demand
" Yon arms:—such prize desert alone should win.
" Only to him impute not for desert
" The chance of brotherhood, that Telamon
" And Peleus owned one Father:—nor be blood
" Inherited, but valour, tried and proved,
" Esteemed the better plea. But—grant the next
" In blood should heir them—was not Peleus' son
" A Father too? While Pyrrhus lives, what place
" For Ajax?—Take away the arms, and back
" To Phthia or to Scyros send them home!

"Teucer is to Achilles close of kin
"As Ajax—yet what claim has Teucer made?
"None—nor is like to make! Enough of blood
"And kin! 'tis deeds this quarrel must decide,—
"And mine are more than memory, sudden-taxed,
"May range in compass of a moderate speech:—
"I tell them in time's order, as I can.
"His Nereïd Mother, prescient of the fate
"That doomed her son, had in a girl's attire
"Disguised him; and the cunning cheat deceived
"All vulgar eyes—our Ajax with the rest.
"But I, 'mid other woman's wares, devised
"To tempt him with such weapons as should stir
"The manlier soul:—and as the seeming maid,
"Detected, eager pounced on shield and spear,
"'O Goddess-born'—I said—'to thee the Fates
"'Reserve the fame of vanquished Pergamus!
"'Give thou their hest fulfilment! Troy in thee
"'Demands her conqueror!'—Then I seized and led
"Among our brave the bravest to his place.
"To me ye owe him! All the deeds he did
"Are mine! I conquered Telephus! 'Twas I
"Whose javelin cured the wound itself had made!
"I battered Thebæ's walls! My prowess won
"Lesbos and Tenedos, Apollo's towns
"Chryse and Cylla, and Scyros:—'twas this hand
"That levelled with the ground Lyrnessus' towers,
"And hundreds more I name not. I it was
"Gave you the hand that furious Hector slew,
"And so by me lies famous Hector slain!
"This armour, for those arms that first revealed

" Achilles, I demand! To me alone
" The living owed it,—let the dead restore!
" Ye not forget the time when Aulis bound
" Our thousand ships:—when for the grief of one
" Sorrowing and sad went all the host he led:—
" When wind was none, or adverse:—and the voice
" Of Fate, too cruel, bade your noblest slay
" At Dian's shrine his unoffending child:—
" How hardly to submit the Parent's soul
" Was won,—how at the very Gods themselves
" He murmured,—how the King could not forget
" That he was Father too.—'Twas I, whose words
" Persuasive to the general weal of Greece
" Subdued the Sire's resistance. Here, to-day,
" I dare confess—Atrides pardon me
" The avowal—'twas no easy suit, and won
" From no impartial Judge. His people's good,
" His brother's cause, his place supreme conferred
" Unanimous, prevailed: and at the price
" Of his own blood he bought a patriot's praise.
" So, Envoy to her Mother next was need
" I went. No prayer that told the horrid truth
" Might hope to win her thence. Some specious lure,
" Some plausible tale was lacked. Had Ajax there
" Been trusted with such mission, well I ween
" Your sails till now had waited for a wind!
" We landed. Fearless to the Ilian towers
" Your Orator I went, and, in the court
" Of Priam, thronged with all its noblest Peers,
" Bold urged the claim of universal Greece,—
" Charged Paris with his theft, and bade him yield

"The wife he stole. King Priam, and with him
"Antenor, I persuaded: but the rest,—
"Paris—his brothers—and the lawless crew
"That called the robber master,—scarce restrained
"From open violence their impious hands.
"Thou, Menelaus, know'st what risk that day,
"First of the war, we twain together ran!
"'Twere long to number all my services
"Of head and hand in this protracted strife
"Rendered to Greece. Long time the wary foe,
"After the first hot skirmish, held his walls;
"And in fair field had valour little chance
"To prove itself. The tenth slow year at last
"Brought glut enough of battle. What, the while,
"Did'st thou, who nothing knowest save to fight?
"What use was thine?—While I with ambush trapped
"The foe,—with trenches girt the camp secure,—
"Cheered up the wearier souls that ill endured
"The lingering warfare's length,—devised supply
"Of arms or victual,—went where'er she would
"For Greece,—and gladly, so I served her cause!
"Next—Heaven-deluded by a lying dream—
"Our Leader wakes, and sudden bids us quit
"The abandoned enterprise. Himself might plead
"The God that warned him in his own excuse:—
"But Ajax?—What! should Ajax suffer this?
"Should Ajax not with all his might resist,
"Entreat, demand, that so we thwart not Fate
"Of Troy foredoomed to fall?—Why stems he not
"The seaward rush?—not bares his blade? not calls
"The coward rout to turn and follow him,

"And win or die?—It had not been too much
"To look for from a tongue that talked so big.
"What if himself he fled?—I saw—and shame
"It was to see—I saw thee turn thy back
"And hoist thy shameful sail!—'What is't ye do?'
"I cried—'O comrades! Are ye mad, when Troy
"'Is all but ours, to fling such prize away,
"'And, after ten long years of war sustained,
"'Bear to your homes no trophy save disgrace?'—
"And with such words and more—for grief that day
"Lent eloquence—from the re-anchored fleet
"I shamed the fliers back;—and Atreus' son
"Summoned once more his chieftains, sore-dismayed,
"To council, where no word, no syllable,
"Dared Ajax utter;—though Thersites dared,
"And yet, I guess, remembers how this hand
"Chastised his ribald insult to the Kings.
"Mine was the voice that roused the timid Chiefs,
"And to their wonted valour called them back.
"Thenceforth—all deeds of prowess wrought by him—
"Whatever seems his merit—I, who dragged
"The coward back to duty, claim for mine.
"What tongue in all our host speaks well of thee?
"Who cares to call thee friend?—Tydides shares
"Gladly with me all warrior-feat and risk,
"And loves, and holds me comrade true:—and he
"May well, methinks, be proud whom Diomed
"Of all our thousands singles out for friend!
"I waited for no lot to bid me front
"Peril of foe and darkness, when, that night,
"Fearless of foe and darkness as myself

" Dolon I slew:—nor slew till from his lips
" I wrung confessed the schemes of treacherous Troy.
" All stood revealed:—no need of further quest!
" Had I brought back that secret, and nought else,
" It had been praise enough. But, greedy yet
" Of more, to Rhesus' tent I pierced, and slew
" In his own camp the Monarch and his train;
" And so, successful to my wildest hope
" Of conquest, drove, as 'twere in triumph, home
" His captured car. Deny me now the arms
" Of him whose steeds that Dolon, but for me,
" Had won in guerdon of his midnight feat:—
" Let Ajax have them:—ye may make at least
" His temper something sweeter with the gift!
" Must I recall the day when this good sword
" Wrought havoc in Sarpedon's Lycian ranks,
" And catalogue my triumphs?—Cæranus,
" Alastor, Chromius, and Alcander slain,
" Noëmon, Halius, Thoüs, Prytanis,
" Chersidamas, and Charops,—Ennomus
" Doomed by his pitiless Fates, and all the rout
" Of meaner foes that underneath yon walls
" This hand o'erthrew? I too have wounds, O Greeks!
" And fair ones, dealt in front! Nor take on trust
" The boast,—behold them!"—(and aside he drew
His robe and showed his scars,)—" behold a breast
" Seamed in your service! What one drop of blood
" In all these years hath Ajax shed for you?
" What wound hath he in all that bulk to show?—
" What if for yonder ships with Troy and Jove
" To boot he fought,—as fight I own he did,

" For 'tis not in my nature to detract
" From praise where praise is due,—must he alone
" Monopolise the merit, nor admit
" The general share? Patroclus, in the arms
" Of great Achilles deemed Achilles' self,
" More helped than he to save from Trojan flames
" Your fleet, and haply its defender too!
" He—he alone with Hector dared to cope!
" So one would think to hear him!—He forgets
" The King, the Chiefs, myself,—that, out of nine
" Ambitious of that peril, chance alone
" Preferred himself. Speak, doughty champion! say
" What of that duel was the proud result?—
" That Hector passed unwounded from the field!
" Ah me! with what a pang I yet recall
" The day when Greece in her Achilles saw
" Her stoutest bulwark fall! Yet in that hour
" Nor grief, nor tears, nor danger held me back,
" But forth I sprang to raise the fallen form:—
" Upon these shoulders—these—I bore his corse
" And arms—the arms I yet have hope to bear.
" Ye saw, this body to support such weight
" Is strong enough:—and—for the soul within—
" This may I say, that not at least it lacks
" The sense to prize such honourable gift.
" Was't but for this his Sea-born Mother sued,
" Ambitious for her son, that boon of Heaven,
" That masterpiece of Vulcan?—but to deck
" This burly sworder's rude and senseless breast,
" That not so much as know the name of one
" Of all the wonders of that sculptured shield,

"The thousand marvels of the triple World
"There imaged, town of Earth or Star of Sky,
"Pleiad or Hyad, ever-unsubmerged
"Arcturus, or Orion's belted sword?—
"This loon, whose insolence presumes to claim
"The arms he lacks the wit to understand?
"What! does he twit me that aloof from War
"I held, and came but late to share your toils?
"Can he not see how that ungenerous taunt
"Wrongs great Achilles' self?—If crime it be
"To feign, we both were guilty:—if delay
"Be censure, I, who led Achilles here,
"At least was in the field as soon as he.
"A loving wife it was that held me back,
"A loving mother him:—to these we gave
"Some earlier hours—the rest were all your own.
"If all my guilt be such as Peleus' Son
"Partakes with me, I care not if I fail
"To quit me of his charge. Laertes' Son
"Had wit to trap Achilles:—'twill be long
"Methinks ere Ajax traps Laertes' Son.
"No marvel that this railer vents on me
"His clumsy slander, who not spares to tax
"Yourselves with shame. For—grant that Palamede
"Was innocent—in what was my offence
"Who charged him more than yours who sentenced him?
"And yet, what answer dared the traitor urge?
"What plea?—Ye saw, not only heard, his guilt:—
"The bribe was patent, and the doom was just.
"Nor mine be all the blame, that Vulcan's isle
"Holds Philoctetes prisoner:—if it needs

" Defence, defend it, for ye shared the act.
" I not deny I counselled, nay implored,
" The Chief to rest him there, and in repose
" From War and travel heal his cruel wound.
" He stayed, and so—he lives! Enough it were
" To prove such counsel loyal:—it was more!
" Its happy issue proves it wise as well.
" Now, for the fate of Troy, our Seers demand
" The Warrior here. Then send!—but send not me:—
" Send Ajax! Let his eloquence assuage
" The smart of pain and anger,—or his art
" Devise some specious lure to win him thence!—
" Sooner I ween shall Simoïs backward flow,—
" Sooner shall Ida leafless stand,—or Greece
" That came to conquer stay to succour Troy,—
" Than, when Ulysses to your service fails,
" Shall wit of stupid Ajax serve your turn!
" Yes, Philoctetes!—unforgiving chafe
" At host, at King, at me:—upon this head
" Heap endless curses:—thirsty for my blood
" Implore the Gods to set me in thy reach!
" Whatever so befall or me or thee,
" I promise thee that prayer:—I swear to seek
" Thine isle and hither bring thee back with me,
" And trust, with Fortune's aid, as well to win
" Those shafts of thine, as erst from yonder walls
" I won their captured Prophet, and, with him,
" The oracular secret of the doom of Troy:—
" As, after, from all Ilion's guard I won
" The fateful image of the Phrygian Maid.
" Yet Ajax dares compare himself with me!

"Ajax—who knows that till that prize is won
"The Fates deny us Troy!—Where does he skulk,
"This doughty warrior, this big hero loud
"With bigger boast?—Does Ajax hesitate,
"Does Ajax falter, when Ulysses braves
"The watchful picket and the perilous night,—
"Dares all the swords of chance-awakened Troy,—
"Surmounts her ramparts,—threads her streets,—invades
"Her inmost heart and citadel,—despoils
"The Temple of its Goddess,—and to Greece
"Bears back the trophy through his baffled foes?—
"But for which feat of mine, your Ajax' shield,
"With all its seven tough hides that fence his own,
"Had wrought ye little help!—That night it was
"That Troy was won:—and I, whose hand that night
"Made possible her conquest, conquered her!
"Nay—growl not, glance not at Tydides there!
"He shared the praise, and well his share he won:—
"Nor thou wert single, when before our ships
"Thou held'st that boasted bulwark of thy shield:—
"Thou had'st a host to help thee,—I but one:
"Though such a one as—did his modest sense
"Not feel that Head is better worth than Hand,
"That Wit in council passes Force in field,—
"Himself might to this glorious prize assert
"No despicable claim: such claim as more
"Than he might urge:—the less-intemperate Chief
"That shares thy name, or stout Eurypylus,—
"Andræmon's gallant heir,—Idomeneus,—
"His Cretan Peer Meriones,—or he
"The brother of great Atreus' greater son,—

"Heroes that, bold in peril as thyself,
"Forbear to match the warrior with the sage,
"And bow their claims to mine. Thy hand is good
"In battle, but thy head demands control:—
"Thy brainless strength is for the moment spent;
"My care forecasts the future:—Thou canst fight,
"But Atreus' son and I must tell thee when!
"Thy use is but of body, mine of mind!
"Who with the galley's skilful Captain ranks
"The mere mechanic oarsman? Who compares
"The trooper with the General? Such art thou
"Measured with me. The head and not the hand
"Counts most in man. I thank the Gods that gave
"The greater vigour to the nobler part!
"But you, O Princes, for the sleepless care
"Of all these years repay your watchman here,
"And with this guerdon for the service past
"Assure the service of all time to come!
"Your toils approach their end. Fate bars no more
"Your road:—'twas I who swept the pathway clear:—
"This hand, that made it possible to win
"Yon town, hath won it!—By our common hopes!—
"By Troy's doomed ramparts tottering to their fall!—
"By that great Goddess wrested from the foe!—
"By aught that yet may hap to claim the aid
"Of calmer counsel!—aught that yet may ask
"Unhesitating valour's instant blow!—
"Aught lacking yet to seal the fate of Troy!—
"Forget not that Ulysses still is yours!
"And, if ye will not give these arms to Me,
"Give them to This!"—and from his vest he drew

The fateful image of the Maid of War.
And, with one impulse moved, the applauding Chiefs
Confessed the mighty power of eloquence,
And gave the Orator the Hero's arms.
But he whose single prowess braved so oft
All Troy with fire and sword, who dared defy
The spear of Hector and the bolt of Jove,
With his own anger lacked the strength to cope,
And passion conquered whom none conquered else.
Furious his sword he seized:—"Thou still, at least,"
He cried—"art mine, if not Ulysses claims
"Thee also—mine, to wield against myself!
"Good blade, so often drunk with Trojan blood,
"Drink now thy Lord's!—for by no meaner hand
"Than Ajax' own may Ajax risk to fall!"
And to his breast, then wounded first, he set
The point, and drove so deep the deadly steel
That the faint hand lacked force to pluck it forth;—
The rushing blood expelled it:—and the turf
Impregnate with the shower that dyed its green
To crimson, blossomed with the self-same flower
That erst had birth from Hyacinthus' wound,
And in its graven cup memorial bears
Of either fate,—the characters that shape
Apollo's wailing cry, and Ajax' name.

II. Thence to the isle that bore Hypsipyle
And Thoas, infamous with ancient stain
Of husbands murdered in their bridal-night,
The victor passed the seas,—to carry back,
For Greece, the fateful shafts of Hercules,

And him who held them. So at last was struck
The final blow of that long-lingering war,
And Troy and Priam fell, and Priam's Queen
Survived that sorrow but in bestial shape,
With hideous howl to vex the winds of Thrace.
Red with the blaze of unextinguished Troy
Flung lurid o'er the waters, through his strait
Rolled Hellespontus yet. Jove's altar-stone
Had drunk the feeble stream of Priam's blood.
The shrieking Priestess, from Apollo's shrine
Dragged by her locks, had spread her hands to Heaven
In impotent appeal. While yet they clasped
The sculptured forms of their ancestral Gods,
Yet clinging to their charred and smouldering fanes,
Ilion had seen her daughters torn, the prize
And spoil of wrangling Greeks. Astyanax
Had perished, from the self-same turret hurled
Where many a time and oft his mother's hand
Had led her boy, and showed him where his Sire,
For him, and for the realm his Fathers swayed,
Waged gallant battle in the field below.
And now the north wind whistled in the shrouds
Urging to sail, and the impatient crews
Bade use the favouring breeze. "Farewell! Farewell!
"Belovèd Troy! they tear us from thy shores!"
The wailing captives cry, and stoop, and kiss
The sacred soil, and turn, and quit for aye
Their home's yet smoking ruins. Last of all,
Of all the saddest sight, comes Hecuba:—
Amid her buried sons, with fond embrace
And weeping kisses pressed on every tomb,

Ulysses found and forced her to the ships,
Laden with one sole relic,—to her breast
Clasping the urn that held her Hector's dust,
In sad exchange for her own silver locks
Strewn on his tomb,—poor funeral gift,—yet all
She has to give, her tresses and her tears!

Fronting the Phrygian shores where yesterday
Troy stood, Bistonia lies;—the wealthy realm
Of Polymestor, to whose charge consigned,
For safeguard from the war that shook his State,
Priam had sent his youngest, Polydore;—
More wisely, had he spared to load his boy
With the too lavish gold that spurred to guilt
The Thracian's greedy soul. When fortune frowned
On Troy, the murderous Guardian slew his Ward,
And from a headland flung him to the waves,
And with the body thought to drown the crime.

By Thrace—till smoother seas and fairer gales—
The King had moored the fleet; when, from the shore
Wide-yawning, sudden rose Achilles' Shade!
Tall looked he, as in life,—his threatening brow
Dark as when, 'mid the Kings, with hand on sword
His wrongful anger blazed at Atreus' Son.
"What! part ye so"—he cried—"ungrateful Greeks!
"Forget ye thus Achilles? Does the grave
"Bury with him the memory of his worth?
"I warn ye! Let my tomb have honours due,
"And slain Polyxena appease my Shade!"

He said,—nor Greece refused her great Ally
The cruel claim, and from her Mother's breast
Its last sad solace tore. The hapless Maid

Yet resolute, by the strong soul upheld
That made her more than Woman, to the tomb
Was led to die, and, at the altar-foot,
True to herself, unblenching eyed the rite
Commenced, and Pyrrhus, ready to the Priest
To hand the fatal knife, with earnest gaze
Fixed wondering on the face that showed no fear.
"Strike! I am ready! Spill this generous blood!
"In throat or bosom sheathe your knife!"—and here
Bosom and throat she bared—"Ye cannot deem
"Polyxena would deign to live a Slave!
"Rather come Death! Though with such sacrifice
"Ye win no grace of any God in Heaven!
"Yet happier could I die, so of my fate
"My mother knew not:—'tis that only thought
"That of its perfect welcome stints your blow!
"Though,—for her tears,—*her* life, and not *my* death,
"Should justlier ask their shedding. Please ye, press
"Less closely on me,—'tis not much to ask,—
"My Ghost will freelier seem to seek the Shades;—
"And uncontaminate by the touch of man,
"As maid should die, dismiss me! Better so
"The Power, whoe'er he be, ye think to please
"Will thank ye for my blood!—If yet one word,
"The last these lips may speak, can touch your hearts,
"'Tis Priam's child, the daughter of a King,
"No nameless slave, beseeches ye to grant
"Her corse unransomed to her mother's arms:—
"Let tears, not gold, redeem it!—Gold enough
"She paid ye for such bargains while she could!"
She said:—nor in the throng was cheek unwet

With weeping save her own:—the very Priest,
Whose knife was buried in her proffered breast,
Unwilling struck, and blinded by his tears.
But she, as to the earth with failing knees
She sank, intrepid to the last, her robe
Drew round her form, and from the vulgar gaze
Concealed what virgin-modesty should hide.
The wailing Captives raise her corse, and count
The long sad tale of Priam's slaughtered line,
And all the blood one House has shed for Troy.
Thee, Maiden, they lament, and thee, but late
A royal wife and mother, Asia's boast,
Now the sad sport of Fate;—the slave whom scarce
Ulysses, but for that great son she bore,
Had deigned to claim for booty;—Hector's fame
So hardly for his Mother finds a Lord!
But o'er the corse, void of its gallant soul,
The wretched matron hangs:—the tears, so oft
Ere now for husband, sons, and country shed,
Her daughter claims anew:—with these she bathes
Her wound, and to the cold lips glues her own,
And beats her breast, alas! too used to blows,
And trails on earth her hoary locks defiled
With clotted gore, and ever with fresh wound
Dealt on her bleeding bosom makes her moan:—
"Liest thou there, my Daughter, of my griefs
"The last—for what of grief remains beyond?—
"To wound afresh thy Mother with thy wound?
"Thou too—lest any sprung of Hecuba
"Should 'scape a bloody death—thou too must bleed!
"Methought a woman had been safe from steel,—

"And lo! the steel is in thy woman's heart!
"The hand that slew thy brothers slays thyself,
"That bane of Troy, that murderer of our House,
"Achilles!—When he fell, by Paris' shaft
"And Phœbus pierced, 'Thank Heaven!' I cried, 'no more
"'Need we to fear Achilles!'—Then, and still,
"I should have feared him! Even his dust pursues
"My race, and from the tomb I feel the foe!
"Alas! 'twas but for Peleus' bloody Son
"That Hecuba was fruitful!—Mighty Troy
"Lies low in ruin, and the public woe
"Ends with her fall:—for me alone, meseems,
"She rests uncaptured, and my sorrows yet
"Not reach their close. I, who but yesterday
"Was greatest of the World, whose husband swayed
"A Kingdom, and whose children matched with Kings,
"Torn from the tombs of all I loved, am dragged
"To want and exile, that Penelope
"May point me, toiling at some menial task,
"To the proud dames of Ithaca, and say
"'Yon slave was Hector's Mother, Priam's wife!'
"And now thou too, my one sad comfort left,
"Must crown the count of all my loved and lost!
"For this I bore thee! at yon tomb to bleed
"A funeral gift to soothe a hostile ghost!
"Am I of iron?—else why live I still?
"What further ill hath cursèd age in store?
"What woe, what death remains to witness yet,
"Ye cruel Gods, that thus ye make me strong
"To suffer and survive?—When Ilion fell
"Could any dream that Priam's lot might yet

"Be envied?—O my Husband, blest in Death,
"Not spared to see the murder of thy child,
"And reft at once of Kingdom and of life!
"At least, as fits the daughter of a King
"Will she be buried, 'mid the sepulchres
"Where sleep her Sires—alas! for me and mine
"Rests no such honour now! Thy funeral gifts
"Must be thy Mother's tears, and exiled hands
"With foreign dust bestrew thy nameless grave!
"So lose I all, save one! For one alone
"Yet for a little space I bear to live,
"My Polydorus, dearest of my sons,
"My youngest once but now my all in one,
"Yet safe, thank Heaven, in Polymestor's charge,
"Whom soon—But first in yonder cleansing flood
"'Tis time I lave this ghastly wound, and wash
"The stain of slaughter from these pallid cheeks!
"Give me an urn, my Troades!" And slow,
Rending her silver tresses as she went,
She tottered to the shore—to find, upcast
Upon the beach, her Polydorus' corse
Gashed with the traitor Thracian's bloody steel!
Loud shrieked the train:—but mute, with woe too big
For speech or tears, the orphaned Mother stood,
All vent of grief by very grief denied,
Rigid, and stone-like, save the shifting glance
Now stern on Earth, now frantic raised to Heaven;—
Now the pale face, and now the cruel wounds
She scans,—these most;—and kindling, as she counts
The gashes, into fury fans her ire,
And, as she yet were absolute Queen, decrees

The Thracian's death, and filled with that sole thought,
Broods o'er the means and moment of revenge.
As raging through the wood the lioness,
Robbed of her suckling whelp, pursues the track
Left by the unseen spoiler's flying foot,—
So,—vengeance nerving grief,—all sense of age
In resolute purpose lost,—goes Hecuba
Straight to the author of that bloody deed,
And craves an audience, with pretence of gold
Yet secret-saved and destined for her boy.
Lured by that bait the greedy Thracian comes
With all fair show of greeting. "Lose no time,
"For thy son's sake, O Queen!—Whate'er thou hast
"To give, for Polydore shall be as safe
"As what thou gav'st before:—by all the Gods
"I swear it!" Fiercely, as the perjurer spoke
She glared upon him;—then the pent-up wrath
Outburst, and furious, as her captive-train
Closed round the prisoner, at his face she sprang,
So frenzy lent her strength, and with her nails
From out the sockets tore the lying eyes,
And in their hollows plunged her fingers, foul
With guilty gore, and, rifled of their orbs,
Ravaged and spoiled the very seats of sight!
Bnt fierce in vengeance for their slaughtered King
The Thracians, hailing shower of darts and stones,
Assailed the band:—and lo! with currish snarl
Amid the hurtling missiles Hecuba
Snapped at the stones, and striving yet for speech
But growled and barked, a Bitch!—(the spot that saw
The change, thence-named, bears witness to the tale,—)

And long, as mourning yet her ancient woes,
With dismal howlings roamed Sithonia's fields,
Pitied of Greek as Trojan, foe as friend,
And pitied so in Heaven of all the Gods,
That Jove's own Spouse and Sister owned her fate
Unjust, and for too cruel blamed the doom.

III. Friend as she was to both, Aurora lacked
The time to mourn Troy's overthrow or weep
The woes of Hecuba:—a nearer grief,
A Mother's sorrow for her Memnon slain,
Touched her too deeply. In that Phrygian strife
Pierced by Achilles' lance she saw him fall,
And, as she saw, the roseate flush of morn
Paled from her brow, and Heaven grew dim with cloud.
Nor on the last sad rites of pyre and torch
Bore she to look;—but, with dishevelled locks,
Flung suppliant at the feet of mighty Jove,
Broken with frequent weeping made her prayer.
"Least of the Dwellers in the golden Sky,
"And rarest graced with temple by mankind,
"A Goddess yet I come, but not to crave
"Guerdon of shrine or sacrificial rite
"Or blaze of altar-fires:—though, would'st thou weigh
"The debt thy Empire owes to her whose watch
"At dawning guards the frontiers of the day,
"My service well might claim them. With no suit
"For meed or honour comes Aurora now:—
"My tears, my prayers, are for my Memnon lost,
"Memnon, my son, who in his uncle's cause
"Too vainly battling, by Achilles' spear

"Fell in his prime—for so Ye willed his fall!
"Hear me, great Sovereign of the Gods, and grant
"My gallant boy some solace of his death,
"And with the boon assuage a Mother's grief!"
So prayed the weeping Goddess:—and, as Jove
Nodded assent, the hero's blazing pyre
Collapsed;—thick clouds of sable-volumed smoke
Discoloured day;—as when the river-mists
Thickening to fog allow no beam of Sun
To pierce beneath. A black and ashy dust
In eddies tossed, condensing as it whirls,
Of natal heat impregnate, orbs itself
To substance, body, living shape, and life;
Takes wings of its own lightness,—seems a bird,
And is the bird it seems,—and winnows air
With audible beat of pinions. More and more,
A thousand sisters of the self-same birth
Flutter to life; and thrice around the pyre
They wheel, and thrice in concert send to Heaven
A clamorous cry. Then, in two separate camps
With their fourth circuit parted, meet in air,
Contending hosts, and fierce with beak and claw
Wage battle, till, with weariness and wounds
Exhausted, on the pyre from which they rose
For funeral-gifts they fall, and warrior-like
Die emulous of the Sire from whom they sprang.
Memnon who gave them being, gives them name,
Memnonides:—and still, as Phœbus rounds
The twelve great Signs, annual they reappear
To fight and perish o'er their Parent's tomb.—
So, 'mid the general dole for Hecuba

Transformed, Aurora for her proper woe
Alone found tears, and still, with pious grief
Renewed and daily weeping, dews the World.

IV. Yet not all Hope, even in that wreck of Troy,
The Fates allowed to perish. With his Gods
A sacred load, nor, sacred less, his Sire,
Upon his shoulders borne, (of all the wealth
Around held worthiest saving,) and his boy
Ascanius, Cytherea's hero-son
To exile passed, and from Antandros' port
Spread to the breeze his sails. The guilty shores
Of Thrace, yet red with Polydorus' blood,
Were left behind; and, helped by wind and wave,
At Delos rode the fleet, where, King and Priest,
Loved of the realm he swayed, the God he served,
Ruled Anius o'er Apollo's darling isle.
Welcome alike to palace and to fane
He gave them;—showed his town, his temples, rich
With votive wealth, and those twin sacred stems
Of palm and olive that in travail-pang
Latona clasped of yore: and, after rite
Of incense to his altar, and of wine,
And entrails of slain heifers duly burned,
High placed on tapestried couches set in hall
His honoured guests, and with all generous gifts
Of Ceres and of Bacchus piled the board.
Then thus Anchises:—"Or my memory errs,
"O Phœbus' chosen Priest, or when long since
"First in these halls I sate, a gallant son
"And daughters fair—twice twain methinks—were thine."

Shaking the snowy fillet on his brows
Sad answered Anius:—"Hero! all too well
"Thy memory serves. Of five dear children then
"Thou saw'st me Sire, whom now, so chance and change
"Sport with all human weal, thou seest bereft
"Well-nigh of all; for, in that distant isle,
"Andros, that bears his name, my absent son,
"Vicegerent in my place, to me is lost.
"Him Phœbus gifted with prophetic power;
"But Liber with a boon my girls endowed
"Past hope, past credence, past all woman's claim;—
"Whate'er they touched their touch at will could turn
"To corn, or juice of olive or of grape;
"And wealth and plenty from their fingers flowed.
"The scourge of Troy, Atrides, heard their fame;
("For deem not but at distance here we felt
"The storm that burst on you,) and by main force
"Dragged from their Sire the all-unwilling Maids,
"And bade them ply their heavenly gift to feed
"His Argive fleet. But from his power they fled
"Each as she could:—two gained Eubœa's isle,
"And two, at Andros, in their brother's court
"Found brief escape, for hot came armed pursuit
"And claim, and, for refusal, threat of war.
"Forgive the timid brother that his fear
"Mastered his love, and to their punishment
"Yielded his sisters:—no Æneas there,
"No Hector stood, through ten long years of siege
"To shield his Andros as they shielded Troy.
"And now the gyves to bind their captive wrists
"Were forged and ready, when, in last appeal

"To Heaven they flung their yet-unfettered arms,—
"'Help us! great Father Bacchus!' and the God
"Who gave their gift gave help, if help it were
"That seemed destruction. In what wondrous wise
"The change of nature and of form was wrought
"I learned not then, nor can I tell ye now:—
"My loss is all I know,—and that aloft
"They soared in likeness of the snowy doves
"That draw the chariot of thy Goddess-Bride."

V. So with that tale, and more, the feast was sped,—
The tables drawn;—and night was given to sleep.
But with the dawn the Exiles rose and sought
Counsel of Heaven;—and, for reply, the voice
Oracular of Phœbus bade them seek
Their ancient Mother and a Kindred-shore.
Down to the beach King Anius led his guests
With parting gifts to either:—to the Sire
A sceptre; to the Boy a mantle fair
And quiver; to Æneas' self a bowl
Long since in thanks for hospitality
By Theban Thersus from Aonia sent,
The work of Mylian Alcon, carven fair
With ample record of an ancient tale.
Graven, distinct with all the seven proud Gates
That told its name, a famous City stood;
And underneath the walls, 'mid funeral rite
And torch and pyre and tomb, with tresses loose
And garments rent, the Matrons of the State
Made public mourning. By their dried-up founts
The Naiads seemed to weep:—the gaunt brown trees

Stood bare of foliage,—and the hungry goat
Gnawed at a herbless rock. And, in mid Thebes
You saw Orion's Daughters:—this, with more
Than woman's courage baring to the steel
Her bosom,—that, in death-swoon with the blade
Deep in her heart,—self-immolate to save
A perishing people. There the funeral train
Was shown, and there in public place the pyre;
And from the virgin-ashes seemed to spring,
Lest that brave race should fail, the Twins whom Fame
Coronæ calls, to lead the mournful pomp
Around their patriot-mothers' honoured tomb.
Life-like in burnished brass the figures shone;
And over all the vessel's brim was rough
With chaplet of Acanthus wrought in gold.

VI. VII. The grateful Trojans answer gift with gift
Nor less in worth:—a censer to the Priest
They offer and a bowl; and to the King
Radiant with gems a crown of ruddy gold.
Thence, mindful how of Teucer's blood they sprang,
To Crete the Teucrians steered, nor long endured
That noxious air infect with pestilence;—
But, glad to leave the hundred-citied Isle,
Bore for Ausonia's havens. Tempest-tossed
A while for shelter from the storm they sought
The Strophad Isles; but from the ungenerous port
The Harpy-pest Aello drove them forth.
And now Dulichium, Same, Ithaca,
The realm of old Laertes' subtle son,
And Neritus, with fairer breeze were passed.

Ambracia, erst contested of the Gods,
They coasted, and the rock that of the Judge
Transformed bears uncouth likeness; wider now
Renowned for great Apollo's Actian fane:—
And by Dodona's consecrated groves
Of vocal oak, and that Chaonian gulf
Where legend tells how King Molossus' sons,
Changed into birds, escaped the baffled flames.
  Thence, by Phæacia's happy orchard-plots
Golden with fruit, adown Epirus' coast
Borne southward, at Buthrotos' port they touch,
Where Helenus, King Priam's prophet-son,
With Phrygian sceptre rules a mimic Troy.
And by his prescience taught what future home
The Fates design them, to Sicania's Isle
Address their course. Three jutting tongues of land
Sicania points to sea:—Pachynos fronts
The showers of Auster; softer Zephyrus
On Lilybœum plays; Pelorus looks
On Boreas and the never-setting Bear.
Towards this the Trojans steer, and, as the night
Descends, with help of oar and favouring tide
Their galleys moor on Zancle's sandy beach,
Where Scylla and Charybdis to the left
And right infest the seas. This swallows down
The whirling bark to spew it forth a wreck:—
That, o'er the zone of ravenous dogs that belts
Her horrible waist, a virgin's face presents,
Once—if not all be false that Bards have sung—
A virgin perfect-fair, and wooed in vain
Of many a youth. Gladlier with Ocean's Nymphs

Consorting and of Ocean's Nymphs beloved,
To these the scornful Maid would count her list
Of baffled lovers:—whom, as once she sleeked
The locks of Galatea, with a sigh
The Sea-Nymph thus bespoke:—"'Tis free to thee,
"Maiden, to spurn the not ungentle love
"Of thine own race:—but I, who spring of Gods
"Nereus and Doris,—I, who in this band
"Of sister Ocean-Nymphs might seem secure,
"No refuge from the Cyclops' passion found
"Save in these waves!"—Tears choked her farther speech:—
The pitying Scylla's marble fingers wiped
The tears away, and tenderly she spake,
"Tell me, O Goddess dear, nor from thy friend,
"For thou canst trust me, hide thy sorrow's cause!"
Then thus the Nereid to Cratæis' child:—
"Of Faunus and the Nymph Symæthis born
"Was Acis, dear to both, but dearer far
"To me. The doubtful down of sixteen years
"Fringed soft the beauteous stripling's tender cheek;
"And me alone he loved, and him alone
"I followed, as the Cyclops followed me.
"Would'st ask which burned the livelier, or my love
"For Acis, or my hate for Polypheme,
"I could not tell thee,—both were equal strong.
"Sweet Venus, what almighty sway is thine!
"This savage, dreadful to the very woods,
"Whose bloody hands no traveller 'scaped alive,
"This scorner of Olympus and the Gods,
"Feels what it is to love, and, passion-fired

" For me, neglects his cavern and his flock,—
" Thinks only of his looks and how to please,—
" Combs with a rake his rugged fell of hair,—
" Trims with a reaping-hook his shaggy beard,—
" And in the fountain's mirror practises
" His truculent face to smiles. His rage, his love
" Of slaughter, and his thirst immense of blood
" Forsake his softened breast:—and to the isle
" The mariner comes safe, and safe departs.
" That season, to Sicilian Ætna's slopes
" A traveller came the Augur Telemus,
" With certain presage of the Fates endowed
" To read all flight of birds. 'Beware!' he cried,
" ' O Polyphemus! fatal to the eye
" ' Set single in thy brow Ulysses comes!'
" With scornful laugh the Cyclops answered him:—
" ' O dullest thou and falsest of all Seers!
" ' 'Tis blinded now, with Love! Another here
" ' Hath fatal been before him!'—And he turned
" Contemptuous from the truthful monitor,
" And moodily with giant foot-track ploughed
" The sands, and flung him weary in his cave.
" A hill there stands, with wedge-like promontory
" Far stretching out to sea, on either side
" Washed by the waters. To its midmost ridge
" The Cyclops climbed and sate:—his woolly charge,
" Unguided now, spontaneous followed him.
" The uprooted pine, fit for some galley's mast,
" That served him for a staff, was laid aside,
" And to his lips his pipe of hundred reeds
" Compact he set, and with his hissing breath

" Blew, till the keen and shrilling pastoral
" O'er all the mountains rang and all the seas.
" I, in a rock's cool grot, on Acis' breast
" Reclined lay listening, as—for all I heard
" Yet stands impressed on memory—thus he sang.
" ' O Galatea! whiter than the leaf
" ' Of snowy privet, fresher than the meads
" ' In spring-time, shapelier than the alder-tree,
" ' Brighter than glass, more wanton than the kid,
" ' Sleeker than Ocean's smoothest-polished shell,
" ' Dearer than Winter's Sun or Summer's shade,
" ' Fairer than apples, statelier than the plane,
" ' Clearer than ice, sweeter than ripened grape,
" ' Softer than swan's-down or new-clotted cream,
" ' And lovelier than all coloured flowers that deck
" ' The watered garden,—so thou would'st not fly!—
" ' Yet, Galatea! harder to be tamed
" ' Than yet-unbroken steer, than knotted oak
" ' More stubborn, falser than the treacherous waves,
" ' Subtler than willow-twig or tendrilled vine
" ' To wind and turn and twist, more hard than rock
" ' To move, more headstrong than the stream in flood,
" ' Prouder than peacock, crueller than fire,
" ' Rougher than burrs, fiercer than nursing bear,
" ' Deafer than Ocean's surges, spitefuller
" ' Than is the trodden snake, and ah!—what most
" ' Of all thy faults I would I could unteach—
" ' Swifter than deer before the yelping pack
" ' And lighter than the wingèd winds to fly!
" ' Yet—would'st thou but reflect, thyself would'st blame
" ' Thy wilful coyness, and repent thy flight;

" ' Thyself would'st rather court me to thy side:—
" ' For mine are all the caverns on the hills
" ' Arched in the living rock, by Summer Suns
" ' Unscorched, and sheltered from the Winter's cold:—
" ' My orchards bend with apples:—from my vines
" ' The grapes in countless clusters hang of gold
" ' Or purple, both alike for thee preserved:—
" ' Thine own fair hands beneath my sylvan shades
" ' Shall pluck wild strawberries:—thyself shalt reap
" ' Harvest of autumn-cornel, or of plum
" ' Bursting with purple juice, or of that kind
" ' More noble, golden, fair as virgin wax.
" ' Nor fruit of chestnut nor of arbutus—
" ' Be thou but mine—shall lack:—of all my trees
" ' Pluck where thou wilt, for all shall be thine own!
" ' Mine are these flocks thou seest, nor only these:—
" ' The pasturing vales, the sheltering woods, the caves
" ' That are my stalls, are full with thousands more:—
" ' I could not, should'st thou ask me, reckon them!
" ' Let paupers count their stock!—and, for their worth,
" ' Trust not my praise:—thyself may'st see,—the ewes
" ' Scarce home can drag their laden udder's weight
" ' To the warm folds where lies my younger wealth
" ' Of lambkin and of kid. Never of milk
" ' My bowls are void, whereof for beverage
" ' Part serves and part curds hardened into cheese.
" ' Nor shall these easy joys, or vulgar gifts
" ' Of fawn, or leveret, kid, or fledgling pair
" ' Of turtles from the nest, alone be thine:—
" ' Late in the mountains, for thy playfellows,
" ' A shaggy bear's twin-cubs I found, so like

"'That scarce thou canst distinguish this from that,—
"'And for my charmer keep the pretty prize.
"'Come, Galatea! come, nor spurn my gifts!
"'Methinks I know myself;—but late I saw
"'This face reflected in the fount, nor found
"'The sight unpleasing. See, how big I am!
"'Jove's self not bigger—if that Jove there be
"'Men prate of in the Skies! My locks profuse
"'O'ershade my brow and shoulders like a grove!
"'Nor hold it blemish that my limbs are rough
"'With thick and bristly fell:—does any praise
"'The leafless tree? What worth the horse whose neck
"'No flowing mane adorns?—The bird with plumes,
"'The sheep with wool for ornament is clad:—
"'And beard and bushy hair are ornament
"'That best becomes a Man!—And if my brow
"'Bears but a single eye, that single eye
"'Is orbed and blazing like a warrior's shield!
"'How looks from yon broad Heavens o'er all the world
"'The glorious Sun?—but with a single eye!
"'Add, that the God who gave me birth is Lord
"'Of all your Seas! No meaner Sire-in-law
"'I proffer to my Bride.—Be pitiful
"'And grant his prayer who never prayed before
"'To any else! Yea! I, who laugh to scorn
"'Your Jove and all his Heaven and all his bolts,
"'Adore thee, Nereid! than the lightning's wrath
"'More dread the anger of those flashing eyes!
"'And yet, more patient could I bear thy scorn
"'Were it for all alike:—but why repulse
"'A Cyclops for this Acis? why prefer

" ' His arms to mine?—But howsoe'er the fool
" ' May please himself or—what is worse—please thee,—
" ' Give me the chance, and he shall find my strength
" ' Proportioned to my frame! This hand shall tear
" ' The heart from out his living quivering breast,
" ' And fling his mangled limbs o'er all the fields,
" ' Ay, o'er the very waters,—so alone
" ' With thee to mingle!—For this passion burns
" ' Within me, and disdain but fans the flame
" ' It thinks to quench:—all Ætna with its fires
" ' Lodged in my tortured bosom seems to rage,
" ' And Galatea pities not my pain!'
" So, starting from his seat, his bootless plaint
" The Cyclops ceased; and chafing, like the bull
" That for his missing heifer quests the mead,
" We watched him, restless pacing to and fro
" His wonted wood-path, till, as round he glared,
" Where hidden, as we thought, secure we lay,
" His furious glance on me and Acis fell!
" ' I see ye both!' he yelled—' 'Tis there ye meet!
" ' Then there ye meet no more!' With such a voice
" He roared as roars a Cyclops in his wrath!
" I to the neighbouring waves in terror sprang
" And plunged:—the hapless Acis turned to fly:—
" ' Help, Galatea! help me, parents mine!'
" He shrieked—' I perish! take me to your realms!'
" But from the rock the following Cyclops tore
" And furious hurled a craggy mass, so huge,
" That by the extreme angle of the stone,
(" For but its angle struck him,) overwhelmed
" And crushed all Acis lay!—What yet the Fates

" Could grant,—ancestral attribute and rank
" Among his watery Race, we gave the Dead.
" The blood exuding crimson from the rock
" Dripped soon with paler red, and in brief space
" Such hue assuming as the river-flood
" Turbid with recent rain-fall, gradual purged
" Itself to clearness. Then a sudden cleft
" Yawned in the stone, and through the rift up-shot
" Tall lance-like shafts of bulrush and of reed,
" And from the widening hollow resonant
" The waters leaped and flashed. More wonder yet—
" Above the flood, waist-deep, his budding horns
" With garland bound of flag and sedge, arose
" A youthful form that, but for added bulk
" And stature and cærulean tint of cheek,
" Seemed like my Acis;—and my Acis' self
" Even thus it was;—but Acis to a stream
" Transformed that yet its ancient name retains."

VIII. So closed the tale, and, as the Nereid ceased
The fair assembly parted;—to the waves
The Sea-Nymphs;—Scylla, to the deeper flood
Afraid to trust herself, now paced unrobed
The thirsty sands, now, in some cool recess
Where calm and land-locked lay the shallower wave,
Refreshed her weary limbs. And, as she bathes,
Cleaving the deep comes Glaucus, denizen
Of Ocean new-enrolled, whose change but late
Anthedon witnessed in Eubœa's isle.
By that fair sight arrested, passion-spelled
He gazed, and with all gentle words essayed

To stay her flight; for terrified she fled,
Nor paused, till on a hill-top by the shore,—
A bluff whose cone-like summit bare of trees
Sloped steeply to the beach,—she stood, and thence
Secure could gaze below; and, yet in doubt
If monster of the Deep or Ocean-God
He were, with wonder marked his hue, his locks
Adown his shoulders spread and o'er his back,
And how below the groin the nobler shape
Of man in wriggling fishy tail was lost.
He saw, and, resting on a rock his arm,
Bespoke her:—"Fairest Maid! no prodigy
"Thou seest, no cruel monster of the Main:—
"A Water-God am I! Not Proteus' self,
"Not Triton, not Palæmon in the seas
"Holds higher place;—though but a mortal late
"I was, whose only joy was in the Deep
"Whereby I lived, or dragging in my nets
"Ashore the finny draught, or from the rocks
"Plying the angler's slender rod and line.
"Along my native shores a level tract
"There lies, betwixt the pastures and the sea,
"Green to the eye; but of its herbage rank
"And coarse nor hornèd heifer cares to taste,
"Nor sheep, nor browsing goat. The busy bee
"Bears thence no honeyed treasure to the hive:—
"Nor ever garland yields it for the brows
"Of youth or maid:—there never comes the swain
"With scythe or sickle. First of men, methinks,
"I chanced to seek the spot, and set me down
"Beside my drying nets, to reckon o'er,

"Flung out before me on the scanty grass,
"The fortune of the morn,—what scaly prey
"My mesh had prisoned, or the treacherous bait
"Lured to my hook. Strange as my tale may seem,
"'Tis true—what should it profit me to lie?—
"Soon as that grass they touched, reanimate
"I saw my captives leap, and flounce, and ply
"Their active fins, as though the Earth were Sea;—
"And, stupid at the marvel as I stared,
"Lo! all my prizes to their parent-main
"Had slipped, and left their captor on the shore,
"His mouth agape with wonder!—Long I stood
"In inward question of the portent's cause:—
"Some God perchance, methought:—or could it be
"Some power occult and virtue of those herbs?
"'Yet sure no force can be in these!' I said,
"And stooped and plucked a handful of the blades,
"And set them to my lips, and tried their taste.
"But scarce my palate with the unwonted juice
"Was moistened, when strange fluttering at my heart
"I felt, and sudden yearning past control
"For new existence woke, and seaward urged
"My hurrying feet. 'Farewell! for ever left
"'O Earth!' I cried—and plunged amid the waves!
"To honoured fellowship the watery Powers
"Received me, and whate'er I yet retained
"Of mortal nature prayed Oceanus
"And Tethys to expunge. These taught me how
"With nine-times-chanted charm, and lustral baths
"A hundred in a hundred different streams,
"To purge the taint of Earth. Nor long it was

" Ere from their separate founts upon my head
" With all their floods the hundred rivers poured.
" Thus far remembrance serves to tell aright
" The wonder that befell:—what next ensued
" I know not—memory for a while is blank.
" But with reviving sense my total change
" I knew of form and feature, nor unchanged
" Perceived the mind within. Then first this beard
" Profuse and green with salt and ooze I saw,—
" These locks that, as I swim, behind me sweep
" The flood,—these broadened shoulders,—and these arms
" Cærulean,—and my legs beneath me blent
" And curved in fishy tail. Yet what avails
" This form?—What boots it that, myself a God,
" Of every God and Goddess of the Sea
" I win the favour, if I win not thine?"
He said—and more had urged;—but from his suit
She fled contemptuous. And, at such repulse
Indignant, 'mid the waves he plunged, and sought
Titanian Circe's monster-peopled halls.

THE

METAMORPHOSES

OF

PUBLIUS OVIDIUS NASO

BOOK XIV.

THE METAMORPHOSES.

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I. By this, from Ætna piled upon the necks
Of writhing Giants, from the Cyclops' fields,—
Unknowing of the use of rake or plough,
That owe no furrow to the yokèd team,—
The Eubœan dweller in the tumbling flood
Had sped;—and—Zancle, Rhegium, left behind
On either hand—beyond the strait that parts
Ausonia and Sicilia, infamous
For wrecks, had passed: and now, with vigorous arms
Oaring the Tuscan waters, reached the hills
Rife with all growth of magic herbs, where reigns
O'er thousand forms of brutes that roam her halls
Ææan Circe, daughter of the Sun.
Whom seen,—due greeting passed, and welcome given,—
Thus Glaucus:—"Goddess! of thy pity help
"A God! for Thou alone, if of thine aid
"Thou hold'st me not unworthy, canst relieve
"My bosom's torment. What the power of herbs
"None better knows than I:—their virtue 'twas

"That made me what thou seest me.—But 'tis fit
"That first I tell thee all my passion's tale.
"'Twas where Messene fronts Italia's coast
"That Scylla first I saw. I blush to tell
"What promises, what prayers, what blandishments
"I urged but to be spurned! But Thou, if might
"There be in chanted spell, thy sacred lips
"In chanted spell unlock; or, if the force
"Of philtred herbs be stronger, blend for me
"Those herbs whose power thyself so oft hast proved.
"For mine own wound I ask nor help nor cure;
"I would not cease to suffer,—still would burn:—
"But oh! let her who kindled feel the flame!"
So he:—and Circe, aptest of her sex
To catch the fire of Love,—or tempered so
At birth, or so disposed by Venus' wrath
In vengeance for the tale her Father told—
Made answer:—"Better would'st thou fare to sue
"Some willing heart that answers Love with Love!
"Thyself had'st justly for thyself been wooed,
"As some would woo thee—would'st thou give them hope.
"Know thine own worth, nor doubt thy power to please.
"Lo! I, a Goddess, of yon glorious Sun
"The Daughter,—I, the Mistress of all spells
"Of song and herb,—I ask but to be thine!
"Spurn her who spurns thee,—grant her prayer who sues,—
"And so to either give her just reward!"
Tempting she spake—but "Sooner,"—quoth the God—
"The waves shall bear the foliage of the grove,
"Or the salt sea-weed clothe yon mountain's top,
"Than Glaucus shift his love while Scylla lives!"

Deep as she felt the slight, had power been hers
To harm himself, Love yet had barred its use:—
But on that rival to herself preferred
Wrathful she swore to wreak her proffer scorned.
Straight all accursèd herbs of direst juice
She culls, and shreds, and o'er the brewage chants
The baleful spells of Hecate. Then she dons
Her mantle blue, and through the fawning brutes
That throng her palace passing, takes her way
Where Rhegium looks on Zancle's fronting rocks,
And o'er the wind-swept waters, firm of step
As though the tumbling flood were solid shore,
Dry-footed treads the surface of the Sea.
A bay there was, curved bow-like in the shore,
In whose cool haunt would Scylla shun the glare
Of sea and sky, when vertical the Sun
Blazed fiercest, and the shadows shortest lay.
There with her baleful charms the Goddess stood
And poisoned all its waters:—there she poured
That liquor of all noxious herbs distilled,
And thrice nine times a magic spell, of sound
And sense unknown, she muttered o'er the flood.
And thither Scylla came, and scarce waist-deep
Stood in the waters, ere amazed she saw
Her nether part with barking monsters girt,
And, ignorant that herself in these beheld
Part of herself, essayed to fly, and strove
In terror to beat off the threatening hounds!
Alas! she carried with her what she fled!
And, looking down for thigh and leg and foot,
Found but, where these should be, Cerberean heads

Growling and snarling,—all her lower self
One rabid pack,—downward from loin and womb
A ravening horror of incorporate beasts!

II. Sore wept the loving Glaucus;—but from her
Whose ruthless magic wrought that cruel scath
He fled, and spurned the Sorceress' proffered love.
But Scylla in those waters kept her place:—
'Twas there, in hate of her who changed her so,
She drowned Ulysses' crew; and there had wrecked
The barks of Troy, but first to rock transformed
She stood;—and still the rock the sailor shuns.

III. Past this, and past Charybdis oar and sail
Had sped the Trojan fleet: Ausonia's shore
Was close, when baffling to the Libyan coast
The tempest drove them back, where to her home
And bed Sidonian Dido took their chief,
Too ill to bear that Phrygian husband's flight.
Self-slain, upon the pyre for purpose fair
Of holier rites commanded, died the Queen,
In death deceiving as in life deceived.
Flying the new walls of that sandy shore
At Eryx, to Acestes' friendly ports
Returned, with sacrifice his Father's tomb
Æneas honoured. Then once more the barks,
Late by Junonian Iris well-nigh burned,
He set to sea. Thy realm, Hippotades,
Where hot with sulphur glows the smoking soil,
Was left behind him, and the rocks where dwell
The Acheloian Sirens. Then the fleet

Reft of its Pilot, coasts Inarime,
And Prochyta, and Pithecusa's isles,
Named of the Apes that haunt their barren hills,
Cercopians erst, whom the great Sire of Gods,
Wroth with the fraud and falsehood of the race,
Changed into loathsome beasts, whose aspect yet
A hideous unlike likeness bears to man.
With shrunken limbs, and flattened nose, and cheeks
Furrowed with senile wrinkles, coated rough
With fell of yellow hair, he bade them hold
Their ancient seats:—but—for the gift of words
Too long misused for lie and perjury—
That first he took away, and left alone
A hoarse and querulous gibber void of sense.

IV. Onward, to right Parthenope he passed,
To left the Æolian's tomb for martial blast
Of trumpet famed; and now the sedgy shores
Of Cuma and the ancient Sibyl's cave
He sought, and prayed the privilege to tread
Avernus' darksome path, and in the Shades
Once more behold his Sire. The Prophetess
Raised slow the glance long downward bent on Earth,
And as the God within her fired her soul
Made answer:—"Great the boon!—but great thou art!
"Strong seen in field, and pious proved in flame!
"Be bold and fear not, Trojan! Heaven allows
"Thy wish. Myself shall guide thee to the plains
"Elysian and the world's extremest bound,
"Where happy dwells thy dear dead Father's Shade.
"No path is barred to virtue!"—So she spake,

And in the sacred grove of Proserpine
Pointed a golden branch, and bade the Chief
The glittering wonder sever from the trunk.
So he—that hest obeyed—the wealth beheld
Of Orcus' awful kingdom,—saw the line
Of all his buried Sires,—and from the lips
Of great Anchises' venerable Shade
Learned what the Laws that rule the realm of Ghosts,
And what new perils yet to front in War
The Fates ordained him. Weary as he paced
The upward path with awful twilight dim,
With that Cumæan guide in high discourse
The way beguiling,—"Whether thou thyself"—
He said—"art very Goddess, or of Gods
"This highest grace hast won,—for Deity
"Henceforth I hold thee! 'Tis to thee I owe
"My life, who living see the seat of Death,
"And living from the seat of Death return.
"For this with temple fair and incense-fume
"My gratitude shall pay thee!"—Sighing deep
Answered the Prophetess—"No Goddess I!
"Nor worthy of such honour deem thou one
"Human as thou art:—though, to tell thee sooth,
"Once might the boon of immortality
"Have been mine own, when erst Apollo's love
"My virgin-favour sought. With prayer and bribe
"He strove to win me,—'Name thy wish,' he said,
"'O maid of Cuma, and the wish is thine!'
"I pointed to a mound of drifted sand:—
"'Give me,' I said, 'as many years complete
"'As in yon heap are grains.' Ah! fool! that asked

"Enduring life without enduring youth!
"Yet these he gave,—and this he pledged beside,
"Would I but list his suit. I spurned the gift,
"And lived, and live, unloved. My happier days
"Long since have set:—my step is tremulous
"With feeble age, and feebler yet to grow:—
"Seven centuries I count, and, ere my years
"May match those grains, for thrice a hundred more
"Must see the harvest reaped, the vintage pressed.
"The time will come when weary length of days,
"Lightening the burden of my shrunken limbs,
"Shall make me but the Ghost of what I was;
"And men will say—'What withered hag like this
"'Had ever God for lover?'—Phœbus' self
"Will meet and know me not, or disavow
"That e'er he wooed me:—so in total change
"Will all be lost save voice;—unseen, my voice
"Will yet be heard,—the Fates will leave me that."

V. So up that steepy path the Sibyl's tale
Lightened the way, and from the Stygian seats
Eubœan Cuma saw the pair emerge;
Whence parting, with due sacrifice, he sought
The shores that bore not yet his nurse's name,
Where Macareus of Neritus, the friend
Of sage Ulysses, worn with travel-toil,
His rest had fixed. Amid the Trojan band,
Much marvelling, Achæmenides he saw
And knew, whom last on Ætna's slopes he left
Deserted:—and amazed whom dead he deemed
So to behold alive,—"What chance or God,"

He said—"preserves thee, Achæmenides?
"How comes a Greek on board Barbarian barks?
"And whither do they steer?" The Greek, once more
Himself, not rough and ragged as he lurked
In Ætna's caves, his garments patched with thorns,
Made answer,—"May I face again the sight
"Of Polyphemus and his ravening jaws
"Dripping with human blood, if dearer now
"To me my house and home in Ithaca
"Than this good ship,—if than a Father less
"I hold and love Æneas! Gratitude
"Must strive in vain to pay the debt I owe!
"I live! I breathe! I look on Heaven and Sun!
"That life that else had gorged the Cyclops' maw—
("How should I cease to thank him for the gift?—)
"Æneas gave!—And if I die to-day
"My bones will find a grave, or 'scape at least
"The bloody burial of that living tomb!
"What thought was mine—if thought it could be called—
"That chill of blank despair, when, left behind
"I saw your flying galleys cleave the seas?
"I would have shouted, but my shout had told
"My hiding-place.—Ulysses' shout it was,
"With all his wit, that well-nigh wrecked his bark!—
"I saw the Cyclops rend and hurl to sea
"That crag enormous,—watched him as he slung
"With force gigantic shower of stone on stone,
"And looked to see each missile, or the swell
"It raised, o'erwhelm ye,—quaking, as myself
"On board had shared your peril. But, when safe
"Beyond that terrible storm your galleys sped,

" Raging he paced all Ætna, 'mid the trunks
" Groping his way, and blundering o'er the rocks
" He lacked the sight to shun. Then to the seas
" He spread his blood-stained hands and yelled his curse
" On Greece and Greeks. 'Oh! but to clutch'—he shrieked—
" ' Ulysses in these hands, or of his mates
" ' I care not whom,—to glut my vengeance full!
" ' To tear him limb from limb! to eat his heart!
" ' To feel his hot blood flush my thirsty throat!
" ' To crunch his quivering flesh between my teeth!
" ' That joy would pay me for the eye he stole,
" ' Or lighten half its loss!'—So savagely
" He raved:—pale terror chilled me as I heard,
" And saw the gore scarce dried upon his cheeks,
" And in his brow the darkened cave of sight,
" And on his cruel hands and on his limbs
" And beard the clotted stain of human blood!
" Death stared me in the face, and Death itself
" Was least of all its terrors. With each pulse
" Methought I felt his clutch,—these vitals, torn
" And mangled, buried quick within his own!
" And ever to my sight the massacre
" Was present of those twain, whom late I saw
" The Savage dash thrice four times to the Earth,
" And, like the lion ravening o'er his prey,
" Crunch muscle, bone, and marrow,—half-alive
" Gorging their quivering limbs! So, paralysed,
" Bloodless and nerveless in my fear I stood,
" And watched the Cyclops feast, and render back
" His bloody meal, in mingled flood of wine

" And undigested flesh!—Myself to serve
" Such banquet next!—For many a day I lurked
" In caverns, trembling at each breeze that stirred,
" Fearing to die, yet longing to be dead!
" With acorns and with grass and leaves of trees
" Battling with famine,—hopeless, helpless, left
" Alone to die or meet that worse than death!
" Long—oh! how long!—I bore it! Then at last
" Nigh land a bark I saw, and made what sign
" For help I could, and to the beach I rushed,
" And pity found from foes:—a Trojan ship
" Rescued a Greek!—Now tell me thou, in turn,
" Old comrade, what the fortune that befell
" Thee and thy Chief and those who sailed with thee."
Then Macareus:—" The son of Hippotas,
" Lord of the Tuscan waters, Æolus
" That subject holds the winds, a wondrous gift,—
" All adverse breezes in a bag confined
" Of ox-hide,—gave our Chief. Nine days he sailed
" With favouring winds, and neared the wished-for shore;
" But, with the dawning of the tenth, his crew,
" Envious and greedy, deeming there to find
" Treasure of gold, unloosed the strings;—and back
" O'er the late-traversed waves our fleet was whirled
" Even to the ports of the Æolian King.
" Thence next the ancient Læstrigonian walls
" Of Lamus' town, where reigned Antiphates,
" We touched;—and to his court with comrades twain
" Envoy I went:—whence hardly with our lives
" Myself and one escaped. The hapless third
" Made bloody banquet for the impious king!

" Fast on our flight with all his cannibal rout
" He followed to the port, with furious shower
" Of stock and stone incessant sinking ships
" And drowning men! Of all our fleet alone
" The bark that bore Ulysses and myself
" Escaped. Sore grieving for the friends we lost
" Those shores we reached that hence across the Deep
" Thou may'st discern at distance:—yonder isle
" Thou seest, then first I saw. I counsel thee—
(" For now the strife is o'er I may not hold
" The justest of the Trojans for my foe,)—
" O Goddess-born! I warn thee, shun the shores
" Of Circe!—There we moored:—but yet in dread
" Of Læstrigon or Cyclops, shrank to land
" Where all was strange. We left it to the lot
" To choose explorers: and the lot myself,
" Eurylochus, Polites tried and true,
" Elpenor who the wine-cup loved too well,
" And twice nine more, to Circe's palace sent.
" Which as we neared, from out the portal sprang
" To meet us thousand savage-seeming beasts,
" Wolf, and She-Bear, and Lioness, that struck
" Our souls with terror, though the fear was vain,
" For, as it proved, no hurt of tooth or claw
" They purposed, but with fawning blandishment
" Of tail and tongue played round us, till a train
" Of hand-maids, issuing, through the marble halls
" Guided us to their Queen. She far within
" Sate stately, in a fair alcove enthroned,
" With sheeny mantle dight and golden robe,
" Amid her court of Nereids and of Nymphs,

" Busy, though not with toil of fleece or loom,
" But from the basket's heap confused of flowers
" In order ranging herbs of various hue,
" Each as she bade them. For what virtue each
" Possessed she knew, and what their force combined,
" And scanned and pondered every separate leaf.
" She, as we entered, with all open cheer
" Received us—met our greeting—fair returned
" All courtesy and compliment we paid;
" And bade her following straightway heap the board
" With cates of toasted barley, wine, and cheese,
" And honey, wherein first herself unseen
" Had mixed some hidden juice that sweetened all:—
" And unsuspicious from her treacherous hand
" We took the proffered cup;—and, as our lips,
" Long-thirsty, drained it, o'er our heads she waved
" Her cursèd wand.—I blush to speak what shame
" There followed—yet I tell it. All my skin
" With sudden bristles roughened;—speech was lost;—
" For words came grunting;—brutish to the Earth
" My look was bowed;—my human visage changed
" To flattened swinish snout;—my neck was thick
" With brawny muscle;—and the hands, that held
" A moment since the goblet, now were feet!
" So by the damnèd magic of her herbs
" Were all, save one, transformed, and in her sty
" Imprisoned beast-like. One, Eurylochus,
" Alone had wit to shun the baneful draught,
" Alone escaped that filthy change, and fled:—
" Else with my fellows had I grunted still
" A hog amid the herd, nor, by his tale

" Apprised, Ulysses ever come to venge
" His comrades' shame. The Heavenly Messenger
" Of peace, Cyllenius, to our Chief had given
" The herb of milky flower and ebon root
" That Gods call Moly. Armed with this, and taught
" By that celestial Monitor its use,
" Boldly he entered the Enchantress' halls,—
" Dashed down the proffered chalice,—struck aside
" The wand she would have waved above his head,—
" And with his flashing blade so terrified
" The baffled Sorceress, that her hand in pledge
" Of amity, her board, her bed he won,
" And claimed for dower his comrades re-transformed.

VI. " So with the juice of some more wholesome herb
" She sprinkled us;—with wand inverted touched
" Our brows;—and, backward as she spoke the spell
" That bound us, gradual from the Earth we rose
" Erect;—the bristles dropped,—the cloven hoof
" United,—from the shoulder played once more
" The arms restored. Around our weeping chief
" Weeping we clung:—what earlier fitter use
" Of speech recovered could we find than thanks?
" What thanks enough?—A twelvemonth in the isle
" We passed, and many a wondrous sight and tale
" I saw and heard,—none wondrous more than this,
" Which, while our chief and Circe toyed apart,
" One of the hand-maids four assigned to tend
" Her rites narrated. In a shrine she showed
" A marble-sculptured youth, with garlands fair
" Bedecked, and bearing on his head the bird

" Our swains call Wood-pecker. And who he was,
" And wherefore honoured so, and why that crest
" He bore, I questioned. 'List'—she said—'and learn,
" 'If yet thou need'st be taught, what magic power
" 'My Mistress wields:—the tale is worth thine ear.
" 'That sculptured youth is Picus, Saturn's son,
" 'Some time Ausonia's King; than whom in field
" 'None better trained or knightlier backed the steed.
" 'There, as he was, thou seest him;—such his shape,
" 'And such his grace;—the marble shows the man,
" 'Gifted in mind as body:—Since his birth
" 'Not four times yet had Greece at Elis held
" 'Quinquennial contest. On his fair young face
" 'The Dryads in the Latian mountains born
" 'Looked lovingly, and all the fountain Nymphs,
" 'Naiads of Anio's wave, or Albula,
" 'Numicus, Almus briefest in his course
" 'Of all the streams, or Nar's impetuous flood,
" 'Or Farfar's borders cool with grateful shade,
" 'Or those Arician lakes that skirt the grove
" 'Where Scythian Dian holds her gloomy reign.
" 'All sighed in vain. One Nymph alone whom erst
" '(So runs the tale) on Palatinus' side
" 'Venilia to Ionian Janus bore,
" 'He loved;—and when her budding charms were ripe
" 'The Maid was his:—What suitor else could vie
" 'With Picus of Laurentum?—Sweet she was
" 'Of form and face, but sweeter yet of voice,
" 'Called Canens for that music. Rocks and woods
" 'Thrilled as she sang; the forest-beasts were won

"'To gentleness; the wandering birds their flight
"'Arrested, and the streams ran slow to hear.
"'One morn, to wile the day with lute and song
"'He left her, in Laurentum's fields to chase
"'The native boar. A gallant steed he pressed,—
"'Two hunting-spears his left hand bore,—a belt
"'With golden buckle closely round his waist
"'His purple tunic girt. The self-same woods
"'It chanced the Daughter of the Sun had sought,
"'Quitting her namesake fields, to gather there
"'Fresh herbs of virtue from the fruitful slopes.
"'Concealed amid the brushwood on the youth
"'Spell-bound she gazed;—unheeded from her lap
"'The new-culled treasure dropped; and in her veins
"'The blood ran fire. From that first fever-flush
"'Rallying, to Picus' side she would have sprung
"'And poured forth all her passion; but his steed
"'Too swift, and eager following train, forbade.
"'"And yet not thus, or I misrate my art,"—
"'She cried,—"Shalt thou escape me! though thy speed
"'"Outstrip the wind, if still these herbs retain
"'"Their virtue or my spells have power to charm!"
"'She said,—and raised before the hunter's sight
"'The image of an unsubstantial boar
"'That fled, and vanished 'mid the forest-maze,
"'Where thickest closed the trunks, nor steed might pass.
"'Eager, and ignorant of the cheat, the youth
"'From his hot courser sprang, and dashed afoot
"'Amid the dense and tangling forest, lost
"'In vain pursuit and hopeless. She the while
"'Stands conning all her spells and chants of power,

" ' Strange prayers that move strange Gods:—the rhymes
that dim
" ' The pallid cheeks of Luna, and suffuse
" ' With watery clouds the visage of her Sire.
" ' And, as she sings, all Heaven is veiled in mist,
" ' All Earth in fog;—and, parted from the train
" ' That blindly seeks its Master, stands the King.
" ' Then—time and place her own—revealed she stood
" ' Before him, and—"By those bright eyes"—she
said—
" ' " That so have thralled mine own,—by that fair face
" ' " That suppliant brings a Goddess to thy feet,—
" ' " O loveliest Youth, take pity on the flame
" ' " That burns this bosom! She who boasts for Sire
" ' " The God whose glance embraces all the World,
" ' " Titanian Circe, should not sue in vain!"
" ' So she:—but sternly cold the King repelled
" ' Her and her prayers. "Whoe'er thou art"—he said—
" ' " Thine am not I! Another holds this heart
" ' " Her captive—captive may she hold it long!
" ' " No foreign charms may Picus lure to break
" ' " His faith to Canens, while his Canens lives!"
" ' But still she pressed—and still the youth refused:—
" ' " Then rue it!" cried she furious:—"Never more
" ' " Shall Canens greet thee back! Live thou to prove
" ' " The peril of a woman's love disdained,
" ' " Such woman most, such lover, so disdained
" ' " As Circe!"—Twice to West, and twice to East,
" ' She turned her,—thrice with magic wand she touched
" ' The youth, and thrice she spoke a spell of power.
" ' He, flying, strangely conscious of a speed

" ' Beyond his wont, beheld his dwindling form
" ' O'erfledged, and, chafing so to know himself
" ' Degraded to a bird, the Latian woods
" ' Sought furious, and with pecking petulant beak
" ' Assailed the gnarlèd trunks and spreading boughs.
" ' His feathers took his mantle's purple hue;—
" ' The golden-buckled belt that girt his waist
" ' With ring of golden plumage girt his neck;—
" ' And naught of Picus, save his name, remained!

VII. " ' By this, his comrades, filling all the wood
" ' With outcry for the Lord they could not find,
" ' Circe had found:—(for she—her purpose wrought—
" ' Had purged the misty air, and left the clouds
" ' To vanish in the Sunshine and the breeze:—)
" ' And charged her with her crime, and violent
" ' With flashing weapons pointed at her breast
" ' Demanded back their Master. But aloft
" ' A sprinkled spell of poisonous juice she flung,
" ' And called on Night and all Night's awful Gods,
" ' Chaos, and Erebus, and Hecate,
" ' With hideous howl of magic prayer invoked:—
" ' And lo! a wonder!—shaken to its roots
" ' The circling forest paled and blanched with fear:
" ' The turf was flecked with sweat of bloody dew:—
" ' The Earth groaned underneath:—the rocks above
" ' With hoarse harsh moaning seemed to answer her:—
" ' And in their ears dogs howled, and round their feet
" ' Black slimy serpents seemed to twine and crawl,
" ' And pale and wan the shadows of the Dead
" ' Before their eyes to flit! And, as aghast

" ' They stood with terror, on their heads she laid
" ' Her poisoned wand, and at the touch they sank
" ' Grovelling in bestial shape,—nor one to one
" ' Alike,—but none with semblance left of man!

VIII. " ' Behind Tartessus sank the westering Sun,
" ' And vainly still, with heart and eye on watch,
" ' Looked Canens for her Lord. Through all the night
" ' The eager search of slave and citizen
" ' With flare of questing torches lit the woods.
" ' Tears, moans, and tresses rent,—all shows of grief,—
" ' What comfort came of such to grief like hers?—
" ' Crazed with that sorrow, forth she broke, and roamed
" ' The Latian fields. Six nights, as many morns
" ' Returning saw her pacing hill and dale,
" ' Sleepless and foodless, wheresoever chance
" ' Her footsteps led:—but, with the sixth, o'erworn
" ' With woe and travel, on the chilly marge
" ' Of Tiber down she sank, in low faint tones
" ' Still tuning grief to music,—like the Swan
" ' That with her own dirge sings herself to death,—
" ' Weeping and wasting, till, dissolved in air
" ' All corporal substance vanished. But her fame
" ' Lived where she died, and to the hallowed spot
" ' The ancient Muses gave the Singer's name.'

" With many a tale like this, and many a sight
" Of wonder, wore the year. When came command
" To hoist once more the sail and tempt the Sea,
" Our hands were dull with sloth and lack of use:—
" And Circe warned so loud what perils yet
" Beset us on that broad and stranger main,

"That I—I own it—shrank;—and, on these shores
"Once safely landed, here made choice to stay."

IX. So Macareus.——And now the marble urn
That holds the ashes of Æneas' Nurse
Is raised, and with these simple lines engraved:—
"Here I, Caieta, by the grateful care
"Of him I nurtured saved from Argive flames,
"Found fitter burning on a Trojan pyre:"—
And, from those grassy slopes new launched, the fleet
Leaves far behind the Goddess evil-famed
And all her treacherous kingdom,—northward bound
Where Tiber, shaded by o'erhanging groves,
Rolls to the sea his yellow-sanded flood.
Latinus' realm and child Æneas wins,
No undisputed prize, but hardly earned
In bitter contest with a savage race
And Turnus, raging for his plighted bride:—
All Latium, all Tyrrhenia, front to front
Opposed,—and Victory holding doubtful long
The balanced fate of many a bloody field:—
Nor lacking either host for stout allies,
Or Trojan, or Rutulian. Not in vain
The son of Venus sought Evander's aid;
And, for like help, where exiled Diomed
In Iapygian Daunus' realm had built
His stately town, and for his bridal dower
Held many a fair domain, went Venulus
Envoy from Turnus. But—his mission told—
The Ætolian made excuse. "I may not pledge"—
He said—"the people of my Sire-in-law

" To such a strife: and of mine own I lack
" Sufficient force to arm:—and, lest ye think
" That plea mere pretext, though to tell my tale
" Wake many a bitter memory, hear it told.
" When charred by Argive flames the crumbling towers
" Of Ilion fell, and, for Oïleus' crime—
" A virgin forced—a Virgin wreaked on all
" The guilt he only should have paid,—the Winds
" Wide o'er the hostile seas our homeward fleet
" Drove scattered. Midnight blackness—Lightning-flame—
" Deluge of rain—all wrath of Sea and Sky
" Was loosed upon us, and, for crown of woe,
" Caphareus' rocks!—Time suffers not at length
" Such tale of wreck and death as, told that day
" In Troy, had made old Priam weep for Greece!
" Myself the ægis-bearing Maid of Heaven
" Preserved, but exiled from my natal soil
" Of Argos still to wander, still pursued
" By Venus vengeful for her ancient wound,—
" With peril on the seas and strife on land
" So worn, that happier oft I deemed their lot
" Whom tempest and Caphareus' roaring surge
" Had whelmed, and wished myself had shared their fate.
" Till by that dire extremity endured
" Of war and hardship over-taxed, my men
" Lost heart—'Enough of wandering! Give us rest!'
" So most:—but Agmon's fiercer spirit, wrought
" To bitterness by suffering, broke in scorn:—
" 'What! fails your patience now, when nought beyond
" 'Is left to bear? What more, be Venus' will
" 'To plague ye fixed as ever, can her spite

" ' Invent? So long as worse remains to dread
" ' Prayer may find place,—but, when the count of ill
" ' Is summed and paid, fear lies beneath our feet!
" ' Hears she?—I care not!—Well I know she hates
" ' Our chief and all who love him:—but her hate
" ' Hath done its worst. Right dearly have we bought
" ' The right to scorn it,—but we scorn it now!'
" So with irreverent taunt he spurred anew
" The Goddess' flagging wrath and ancient grudge.
" Few heard approving:—most aloud rebuked
" The reckless speech. He would have answered us,
" But voice and voice's channel in the act
" Together shrank:—his locks were changed to plumes,—
" His dwindled neck, his breast, his back, were plumed,—
" His stronger-feathered arms and elbows curved
" To wings,—his feet were claws,—and all his face
" Contracted, sharp with hard and horny beak.
" Rhetenor, Nycteus, Idas, at his change
" Astounded gazing, shared it,—Lycus too,
" Abas, and more; till of my crew the most
" Were birds that with sonorous beat of wings
" Wheeled screaming round my galley's oars. Dost ask
" What form they bore?—Most swan-like in their shape
" And snowy whiteness were they, yet not swans.
" For me, but hardly with my remnant left,
" I 'scaped, to find in Daunus' arid realm
" A Sire-in-law, and these bare fields I rule."

X. So answered, from the Calydonian's halls,
Departed Venulus. Peucetia's gulf,
Messapia's fields he passed,—and saw the caves

Dim with thick leafage, dank with dripping dews,
Where haunts the goat-hoofed Pan; in earlier times
Loved of the local Nymphs, till Appulus,
The Shepherd, drave them thence in terror forth:—
But—that first fear o'ermastered—as they saw
How mean a foe they fled, and to the lyre
Their interrupted measure trod anew,
The churl stood scoffing, and with taunt and gibe
Obscene and clownish gesture mocked their sport;
Nor ceased, till round his throat a choking bark
Encased him in a Tree!—The plant retains
The nature of the man; and in the fruit
Of the wild bitter Olive yet we trace
The bitter tongue of him who gave it birth.

XI. XII. Back comes the Envoy. Turnus must not hope
Ætolian help. Without such aid the war
The Rutuli must wage. A thousand deaths
Thin either host. Upon the pine-built fleet
Of Troy swoops Turnus with his greedy torch,
And the flames threaten what the waters spared.
Pitch, resin, wax, all easier food of fire
Had Mulciber consumed;—around the mast
Coiling he licked the topsails;—in the hull
The Rowers' benches smoked. But, mindful then
How from her Ida's crest erewhile the axe
Those pines had shorn, the Mother of the Gods
Uprose:—and cymbal-clash and trumpet-clang
Shook all the Heavens as down to Earth she urged
Her chariot's lion-team. "In vain," she cried,
"Turnus! thy sacrilegious torch assails

"What I protect! No fires profane may harm
"Or part or parcel of my sacred groves!"
Pealed, as she spoke, the thunder,—from the clouds
Poured deluge of fierce rain and leaping hail,—
And forth to battle rushed Astræus' sons
Confounding Sky and Ocean. One alone
She used to work her will. Asunder snapped
The hempen ropes that moored the fleet of Troy,
And, seaward headlong drifting, sank the barks
Changed as they sank. Wood softened into flesh,—
Each beaky prow took outline of a face,—
The oars struck out in swimming hands and feet,—
The sides kept place as ribs,—the central keel
Beneath supplied a spine,—the shredded sails
In glossy tresses floated,—and the yards
To shoulders turned and arms. Cærulean-hued
As erst, amid the billows, late their dread,
The Ocean-Naiads played;—the mountain-born
Forgot their birth adopted of the Waves!
Still, mindful of their many perils past
Upon those cruel seas, their helping hands
Uphold all vessels reeling tempest-tossed,
Save such as carry Greeks,—the hated race
Unpardoned yet since Troy's disastrous day.
For this that shattered bark of Neritus
Well-pleased they saw,—for this rejoicing marked
Alcinous' galley, full in sight of port,
Fixed in mid sea and stiffened into stone!

XIII. 'Twas hoped that portent of a fleet transformed
To living Nymphs of Ocean might have awed

Rutulia from the war:—but still it raged,
With Gods to aid on either side, and men
Like Gods in might. Not now for dotal realm
Or royal Sire-in-law, not now for thee
They fight, Lavinia! but for victory
And shame to yield them conquered. Venus sees
Her son at last prevail. With Turnus falls
His Ardea,—Ardea, held, while Turnus lived.
Sovereign of Cities. From her walls o'erthrown
In ruin, smouldering with barbarian fires,
A bird there rose, unknown till then, that fanned
Her ashes with its wings. Its note, its form
Emaciate, and its pallid hue, beseemed
The captured town it sprang from. Even the name
It bears,—and when men hear the Heron's cry
They fancy Ardea mourns for Ardea's fall.

XIV. By this the favour of all Gods above
Æneas' worth had won:—even Juno's self
Renounced at last her ancient hate of Troy.
Fair-founded Alba rose;—Iulus grew;—
And Cytherea's Son was ripe for Heaven.
Then Venus sought the skies, and round her Sire
Twining her arms—"O Father mine!" she said,
"Kind ever to thy child, be kindest now!
"Born of my blood Æneas hails in Thee
"His Grandsire. If that claim deserve thy grace,
"Make him a God!—inferior, if thou wilt,
"In rank, but still a God. Enough that once
"Already hath he passed the waves of Styx,
"And trodden once the unlovely realm of Hell!"

Heaven seconded her prayer:—not Juno heard
Unmoved, and gracious nodded in assent.
Then spake the Thunderer:—"Worthy are ye both,—
"The Suitor and the Subject of the suit!
"Daughter, thy boon is granted!"—Loving thanks
She paid the Sire:—then joyful to the shores
Laurentian urged the Doves that draw her car,
Where through his shading reeds Numicius rolls
His sweeter waters to the neighbouring brine:
And bade the cleansing River lave, and bear
All grosser substance, liable to Death,
Adown his noiseless current to the Sea.
The hornèd Power obeyed. Whatever yet
Was mortal of Æneas in the flood
Was purged and washed away:—the nobler part
Alone remained. So purified, his form
With scent ambrosial, nectarous, divine,
His mother steeped, and made her Son a God!
And Rome among the Indigetes enrolled
The Hero's name, and gave him shrine and rite.

XV. So to Ascanius, double-named, the sway
Of Alba fell and Latium. Sylvius next
Succeeding to a new Latinus left
The ancient name and sceptre. Glorious then
King Alba reigned, whose heir was Epitus;
Then Capitus and Capys,—(Capys first,—)
And Tiberinus;—Tiber's Tuscan flood
That drowned him bears his name. His elder-born
And fiercer, Remulus, who from the bolts
Of Heaven he dared to arrogate and ape,

Met fitting fate, to younger Acrotas,
More gentle, left the kingdom;—Acrotas
To Aventinus, in the namesake hill
Whereon he reigned entombed; whom Procas next
Succeeding ruled the people Palatine.
In Procas' time it was Pomona lived,
Of Latian Hamadryads skilfullest
To range the garden's rainbow-hues and tend
The orchard-plots whose fruitage gave her name;
Haunting nor wood nor stream, intent alone
On rural cares where golden with their load
The apple-branches bend. No huntress-Nymph
With javelin armed, the pruning-knife alone
She bore for weapon, sedulous to trim
The o'ergrowth of the too luxuriant boughs,
To teach the grafted scion how to draw
New sap and vigour from the fissured stock,
Or, careful lest her darlings suffer thirst,
Round the coiled fibres of the bibulous roots
In many a bubbling runnel guide the stream:—
This was her task, her joy. No thought of Love
Had touched her soul. Within her garden's bounds
Secure from man's approach, or rude attempt
Of rustic swains, she dwelt. A thousand tricks
In vain the capering band of Satyrs tried,
And Pan, his temples bound with piny wreath,
And old Silvanus, younger than his years,
And that rough God who scares the garden-thieves
With moony hook and arm obscene, to win
Entrance and conquest. Better than all these
Vertumnus loved—than these no better fared.

Oft in a reaper's guise,—his basket piled
With sheaves,—a very reaper's self he seemed;—
A mower now, with hay-wisp in his locks
Entwined, returning from the new-cut field;—
Or, goad in hand, a ploughman,—you might swear
A moment since he loosed his swinking team;—
A hedger, or a dresser of the vine,
With hook or shears;—an apple-gatherer now
With balanced ladder;—now with sword and shield
A soldier;—now a fisher with his rod.
Last, when a thousand failed, on one disguise
He hit, that won him access to his Love.
Robed as an ancient crone, her straggling locks
Of gray escaping from her turbaned brows,
And tottering on a staff, the garden-gate
He passed, and with admiring gaze its wealth
Surveying—"O! well done!" he cried, "Most fair
"Of Gardeners!" and, as greeting beldam might,
Kissed once and twice the complimented Maid;
And in his kiss more fervour seemed to glow
Than greeting beldams use. Then, on a bank
Beside her seated, praised and praised again
The branches bending with their autumn-load.
Before them, round a spreading elm, a vine
With tendril-clasp and purple cluster twined.
"Ah! happy union!" cried he—"Had the tree
"Stood unembraced, what worth were in its leaves
"To win regard or seeking?—Were the Vine
"Unwedded to that groom whose lusty arms
"Uphold her, on the soil her feeble stem
"Had trailed, a barren stock! That lesson sure

" Should counsel thee, that shrinkest from the thought
" Of wedlock-bond, nor car'st to find a mate.
" Ah! would'st thou learn it, sweetest! at thy feet
" Should kneel more rival wooers than of old
" Had Helen, or the bride whose beauty stirred
" The Centaur-Lapith quarrel,—than besieged
" In her lone isle the Dame that had for spouse
" Ulysses, valiant most to craven foes!
" Even now thy favour, cruel as thou art,
" A thousand suitors seek;—all Demi-Gods
" And Gods,—whate'er on Alba's mountain-slopes
" Of strain celestial haunts. O be thou wise
" And list my rede, and take thee fitting mate!
" Trust me, I love thee better than thou think'st,
" Nor bid thee wed a rude and vulgar spouse.
" Vertumnus loves thee well:—my faith for his
" I pledge thee, for I know him as myself.
" No homeless wanderer he, but of these hills
" A denizen established:—not of those
" Whose passion wakes with sight and dies with loss,
" As lighter likings use:—Thou first, thou last,
" Shall be his Love! To thee alone he vows
" All years that Life shall lend him. Young he is,
" And fair, and versatile in shifting shapes
" To mask his form:—Whate'er thou wilt, he'll be.
" Alike your tastes and cares;—the earliest growth
" Thy branches bear is his,—thy firstling fruits
" He treasures:—but not now for gathered fruit
" Of orchard or for watered garden's flower
" He asks:—thee only, thee, he cares to win!
" Be piteous to his passion, and believe

" For his the suit I urge. I warn thee, dread
" The avenging Gods,—Idalia's Queen that hates
" The bosom barred to love, and, more than all,
" The wrath of unforgetting Nemesis!
" List,—for my age hath many a tale in store,—
" A story, known in Cyprus long ago,—
" That well may melt that stony heart of thine.—
" Iphis, of humbler birth, a noble maid
" Of Teucer's lineage, Anaxarete,
" Had seen and loved. A fire was in his veins
" That would not quench, though long and manfully
" Reason with Passion wrestled. At her gates
" A suppliant, in her nurse's ear he poured
" His miserable tale, and, by the love
" She bore her child, besought her help his suit,
" Or courted with fair speech and liberal gift
" Alliance of the household ministers,
" And graved the waxen page, and bade them lay
" Its passionate pleadings in their mistress' sight,—
" Or on her portals hung the garland, dewed
" With lover's tears, and on the threshold-stone
" Despairing flung at length his tender limbs,
" And cursed the cruel door that would not ope.
" Deafer than seas when mountain-high the surge
" Roars round the setting Hædi,—stubborner
" Than steel new-tempered from the Noric forge,—
" Harder than living rock,—she sate the while
" Scornful and scoffing, with a heartless jeer
" That made contempt more bitter blasting hope:—
" Till, by that torment past endurance stung,
" And resolute to end it, at her doors

" Thus made the helpless youth his latest moan.
" ' Thou conquerest, Anaxarete!—No more
" ' I weary thee with wooing. Celebrate
" ' Thy triumph! Chant thy Pæan! Round thy brows
" ' The laurel bind! Thou conquerest, and I die!
" ' Be happy in that death, O heart of stone!
" ' Yet own, despite thyself, such sacrifice
" ' Worthy thy praise!—At least I please thee so!
" ' Deny me not that merit!—Nor forget
" ' That with my latest breath I breathe thy name!
" ' Yon Sun and those sweet eyes, my double light,
" ' For Iphis set together!—Not to Fame
" ' I leave my Death's report,—myself am here
" ' In presence with my lifeless corse to feed
" ' Thy cruel gaze.—But O ye juster Gods,
" ' If mortal chances touch immortal breasts,
" ' Be to my memory kind!—'tis all the prayer
" ' This failing tongue yet keeps the strength to frame,—
" ' Transmit to after-times my hapless tale,
" ' And give to Fame the years denied to Life!'
" He ceased:—and to the columns, that so oft
" Himself had wreathed with flowers, with streaming eyes
" And wasted hands made fast the fatal cord:—
" ' This garland, cruel barbarous Maid,'—he cried,—
" ' Perchance may please thee better!'—Then he thrust
" His neck within the noose, and, with his face
" Even in that moment turned to her he loved,
" Swung there a strangled corse! and with his feet
" Convulsed in death-pang battering on the doors
" Such dolorous echo waked—(as though without

" One knocked in urgent need—) that all the slaves
" Heard it, and rushed, and open flung the leaves,
" And shrieking saw the ghastly face of Death,
" Too late for rescue!—To his mother's home
" Long widowed of its Lord, the corse they bore.
" Conceive how frantic to her breast she clasped
" Those frigid limbs!—Enough!—All wailing made
" That wretched Mothers use,—all offices
" Performed that wretched Mothers pay their dead,—
" Weeping she followed through the weeping town
" Her darling to the pyre. It chanced, the house
" Of Anaxarete,—(or so the Powers
" Avenging willed it that decreed her doom,—)
" The sad procession passed. The sound of wail
" Smote on her ears. 'Come! let us see'—she cried—
" 'This dismal show!'—and to a gallery
" With spacious windows fronting o'er the street
" She hied her, and looked forth:—nor sooner saw
" The pale dead face of Iphis on his bier,
" Than lo! her staring eyes were fixed,—the blood
" Forsook her paling cheeks:—She would have turned,—
" Her feet refused their office:—Would have looked
" Away, and could not:—in her breast the heart,
" Long since to marble frozen, froze the rest,
" And all the living Maid was lifeless stone!
" Nay! 'tis no fable!—Yet in Salamis
" The Fane of Venus, called 'the Looker-forth,'
" The statue holds and shows. O Fairest! learn
" My story's moral! Lay this cold disdain
" Aside, and list his suit who loves thee well.

"So may the nipping frosts of Spring-time spare
"Thy tender peeping buds, nor boisterous winds
"Untimely shake thy blossoms from the bough!"
So urgent pressed the seeming crone:—the Maid
Unheeding heard. Then versatile he flung
Aside the vain disguise of age, and stood
In all his youth, a God,—bright as the Sun
That scattering all the shrouding rack of clouds
Shines victor o'er the Heavens,—prepared for force,—
But force was needless;—and by beauty won
The yielding Nymph confessed the mutual flame.

XVI. By force usurping on Ausonia's throne
Next Procas sate Amulius; till the sons
Of Rhea to their grandsire Numitor
Restored his rightful sceptre.—At the feast
Of Pales founded rose the earliest walls
That girdled Rome;—besieged as soon as built
By Tatius and his power. The traitress-Maid
That showed the pathway to the Capitol,
Tarpeia, crushed beneath the Sabine shields,
Found treason's merited meed. But o'er her corse,
Silent as wolves, the bands of Cures scaled
The sleeping city's ramparts. Ilia's son
The gates had barred; but noiseless on its hinge
Saturnia's self one postern open flung.
Alone the keener sense of Venus caught
The bolt withdrawn, and,—but that Heaven forbids
A Godhead to undo a Godhead's deed,—
Herself had reassured it. Nigh the spot
By Janus' temple gushes, icy-cold,

A fountain sacred to the Ausonian Nymphs.
To these she called for succour, nor in vain
Preferred the just appeal. From all their depths
The ready Naiads summoned all their waves,
And, overflowing, by the open porch
Of Janus swept in torrent, broad, but scant
Of depth to flood the fane or bar the road.
Then, round the sacred springs that feed below
Their everlasting founts, sulphureous fires
They light, till, fused through every channelled vein,
The keen bituminous vapour sets a-glow
The flood within, and what but now was cold
As Alpine snow is hot as Ætna's fire.
Laved in the seething stream the portal-posts
Of Janus smoked; and, blocking all the path
Betrayed in vain, the new-born river held
At bay the baffled Sabine, till the town
Had time to rouse and arm, and Romulus
To battle led the eager brood of Mars.
With corse on corse of foe or citizen
The soil of Rome was strewn;—each impious blade
Was red with kindred gore:—the Sabine smote
His daughter's husband, or the Roman slew
His consort's sire. But ere the bitter end
A treaty stayed the sword's arbitrament,
And Tatius shared the blended kingdoms' throne.

XVII. Tatius was dead:—and o'er a double realm
Supreme, to either meting equal laws,
Reigned Romulus. Unhelmed before the Sire
Of Gods and men the Lord of battles knelt:—

"Father!" he said—"The time is ripe, the weal
"Of Rome assured, nor on one ruler's life
"Dependent longer. Now I claim the boon
"Long since in solemn conclave of the Gods
"To me and to thy worthy grandson pledged,—
"For unforgotten in my memory dwell
"Thy gracious words—'Hereafter shall be One
"'For whom my Mars may ask, nor be denied,
"'A place in Heaven.'—Fulfil thy promise now!"
He said:—and awful, as the Almighty Sire
Nodded assent, with thunder-clash and blaze
Of lightning over Rome a tempest broke,
And sudden darkness veiled the quaking town.
That sign, propitious to his purposed rapt,
The War-God hailed, and vaulting, lance in hand
Upon his chariot, o'er the steeds that whirled
His slaughter-crimsoned axle shook the lash,
And down through æther to the wood-crowned height
Of Palatinus shot; and from the seat
Of judgment, to the folk now all his own
Dispensing royal justice, snatched the child
Of Ilia to the Skies. As from the sling
The bullet speeds and, lessening as it flies,
In distance vanishes, his mortal part,
Purged in the purer air, adown the winds
Was borne and lost:—with nobler port he rose
And larger stature—Romulus no more—
Quirinus now; and robed, as in his fane
Stands yet his mantled image, like a God
Arrayed to press the banquet-couch of Heaven.

XVIII. Nor long Hersilia for her husband lost
Was doomed to weep. Adown the radiant arch
That spans the skies shot Iris, with the hest
Of Jove's great consort charged. "Be comforted
"O Queen! O boast and pride of either race
"Latian or Sabine! Worthiest erst to wed
"The noblest of Earth's husbands, worthy now
"To mate Quirinus! Wipe away thy tears!
"And, if once more thy longing eyes would fain
"Look on thy Spouse, arise, and follow me
"Where on the mount Quirinal nods the grove
"That shades the temple of the Roman King."
So spake the Heavenly Envoy:—And the Queen,
With timorous glance scarce lifted from the ground,
Replied—"O Goddess!—for a Goddess sure
"Thou art, though by what name divine addressed
"I know not,—lead, oh! lead me to the spot!
"Give me to look once more upon my Lord,
"Once more behold that face, whose sight to me
"Is as the sight of Heaven! She spake; and, led
By that celestial guidance, to the hill
Quirinal passed. And from its sphere a star
Shot lucid down to Earth, with lambent flame
Lighting her trailing tresses, as aloft
It bore her to the skies:—where, to the breast
Of Rome's great Founder clasped—immortal now
As he,—a Goddess, by Quirinus' side
The new-named Ora took her place in Heaven.

THE

METAMORPHOSES

OF

PUBLIUS OVIDIUS NASO

BOOK XV.

THE METAMORPHOSES.

BOOK XV.

I. Who worthiest should succeed so great a King
Was question now,—who capable to bear
That burden's weight:—and Fame, whose herald voice
Fore-runs Event, to noble Numa's hand
Assigned the sceptre. Long adept in all
That Sabine lore could teach, nor so content,
With larger aim his soul aspired to know
All Nature and her Laws. That yearning erst
From Cures and his home had urged him forth,
A wanderer, to the town where Hercules
Of old had dwelt a guest. And "how it happed"
He asked—"that on Italian soil a Greek
"Those walls had reared?" A gray-beard of the place,
Versed in all local legend, made reply.
"Long since, 'tis said, on these Lavinian shores
"Alcides landed, rich with Geryon's kine
"Spoiled from Iberian fields; and, while his prize
"Our plenteous pastures cropped, in Croto's halls
"Found hospitable shelter and repose;

"And, parting, spake prophetic:—'On this spot
"'In time to come thy progeny shall see
"'A stately City!' And his word was sooth.
"In Argos, of Alcmæon's lineage born,
"Graced with all favour of the Gods, there dwelt
"One Myscelus:—to whom in dreams appeared
"The wielder of the club. 'Arise!' he said—
"'And leave thy native shores, and take thy way
"'Where distant Æsaris to Ocean rolls
"'His pebbly flood:—nor fail, lest of neglect
"'Come sorrow and repentance!'—Warning so
"The vision fled, and, with the vision, sleep.
"Silent and anxious, all that day the youth
"Pondered the dream, and doubtful of resolve.
"'Depart!' the God had said;—but to depart
"The Laws forbade:—in Argos, to desert
"The natal soil was Death.—Beneath the wave
"Once more had Phœbus plunged his fiery orb;—
"Once more the brow of Night was gemmed with stars;—
"Again the vision came,—again the God—
"But now with graver warning, sterner threat,—
"Bade him depart. So overawed, the Youth
"Made ready with his household-Gods to seek
"On foreign shores a home:—but through the town
"Ran murmur, and, impeached for breach of Law
"They haled him to the Judge. The cause was short,—
"The crime, without a witness, manifest:
"But, ere his sentence spoken, to the skies
"Piteous he spread his hands:—'O Thou!' he cried—
"'By twelve great labours raised to place in Heaven,
"'Befriend me now! for of my crime Thyself

" 'Wert Author!'——Ancient use by pebbles, white
" Or black, absolving or condemning guilt,
" Was wont to utter doom. Unanimous,
" Stone upon stone, within the pitiless urn
" The sable votes were dropped:—and lo! outpoured
" For counting, all were white! The fatal hue
" Alcides changed,—and Myscelus went free!
" For that deliverance to Amphitryon's Son
" Due thanks he paid,—and o'er the Ionian main
" With favouring breezes sailed. Tarentum, reared
" By Spartan hands, was passed, and Sybaris,
" And Sallentine Neæthus, Thurium's gulf,
" And Temese, and Iapygia's fields,
" Whence, coasting by the cliffs that front the Sea,
" The mouth he reached of destined Æsaris,
" Nor inland far descried the tomb that held
" Old Croto's honoured bones:—and on that shore,
" Assigned of Heaven, his town's foundations laid,
" And gave the place its buried Worthy's name.
" So, held for certain truth, Tradition tells
" Crotona's origin; and so on soil
" Italian rose this city of the Greek."

II. 'Twas there in voluntary exile dwelt
The Samian Sage, that, for the hate he bore
To tyranny and tyrants, fled the Isle
That gave him birth:—a soul that over-leaped
The gulf 'twixt Earth and Heaven, and to the Gods
Inquiring soared. All secrets Nature hides
From grosser sight his mental ken had power
To probe and fathom:—and the lore, acquired

By many a studious hour, he loved to teach
For profit of his kind. Upon his lips
Silent and rapt the admiring crowd would hang,
The while he traced Creation's origin,—
What Nature was,—what God;—how fell the snow;—
Whence flashed the blaze of lightning;—whether Jove
Or warring winds struck thunder from the clouds;—
And all the riddles that perplex the World.
He earliest to the board of man forbade
Whate'er drew breath of life; and, eloquent
With wisdom wasted on a barbarous age,
"Forbear!" he cried—"O Mortals! nor with food
"Unhallowed dare pollute the frame designed
"For purer nurture! Yours the harvest waves;—
"For you the orchard bends its loaded boughs,
"The vine its cluster swells, the garden bears
"All wholesome herbs, or fresh, or to the taste
"Made palatable, warmed by kindly fire;—
"For you the udder yields its milky flood,—
"The hive its fragrant treasure;—prodigal
"For you spreads Nature all her varied store
"Of dainties, pure of slaughter and of blood!
"Flesh is the food of brutes!—though even of these
"The gentler steed, the herd, the flock, refuse
"The hideous provender. The fiercer tribes
"Untamable, Armenia's tiger-brood,
"Lion, and wolf, and bear, alone delight
"To glut with blood their ravening hunger's rage.
"What guilt of nature urges Man to cram
"His bowels with the bowels of a beast,
"With body fat his body's bulk, and choose

"To nourish life with death of all that lives?—
"'Mid all the store that Mother Nature, best
"Of parents, proffers, must our savage teeth
"Muscle from muscle rend and bone from bone,
"And imitate the Cyclops' bloody feast?—
"Nor without gust of slaughter satisfy
"The craving belly's void?—Not so ordained
"That earlier happier Age, surnamed of Gold,
"When Man on orchard-fruit and garden-herb
"Contented fed, nor stained his lips with blood.
"Securely then the birds might skim the air;—
"The hare untrembling sit;—no baited hook
"Lured to his doom the unsuspecting fish;—
"And, fearless of the uninvented snare,
"All creatures lived in peace. Whose evil greed,
"Loathing his natural diet, glutted first
"With flesh his maw, I know not; but most sure
"He paved the way to crime. The knife that shed
"The blood of beasts was parent of the sword
"Red with the gore of Man!—I grant it just
"To take the life that else would take our own,—
"To slay, but not to eat. That right abused
"Of self-defence was strained to license crime.
"Then first accused of guilt, the Swine, for food
"Broad-snouted grubbing in the seeded fields,
"Arraigned for marring of the farmer's hope,
"Was judged to merit death. Then first the Goat,
"For nibbling at the tendrilled vine condemned,
"At Bacchus' altars bled. What fault there was
"Perchance, in either, either paid. But ye—
"What had ye done, ye flocks, ye peaceful race

" Created for Man's blessing, that provide
" To slake his thirst your udder's nectarous draught,
" That with your fleece wrap warm his shivering limbs,
" And serve him better with your life than death?—
" What fault was in the Ox, a creature mild
" And harmless, docile, born with patient toil
" To lighten half the labour of the fields?—
" Ungrateful he, and little worth to reap
" The crop he sowed, that, from the crookèd share
" Untraced, his ploughman slew, and to the axe
" Condemned the neck that, worn beneath his yoke,
" For many a Spring his furrows traced, and home
" With many a harvest dragged his Autumn-wain!
" Nor this is all:—but Man must of his guilt
" Make Heaven itself accomplice, and believe
" The Gods with slaughter of their creatures pleased!
" Lo! at the altar—fairest of his kind,—
" And by that very fairness marked for doom,—
" The guiltless victim stands,—bedecked for death
" With wreath and garland!—Ignorant he hears
" The muttering Priest,—feels ignorant his brows
" White with the sprinkling of the salted meal
" To his own labour owed,—and ignorant
" Wonders, perchance, to see the lustral urn
" Flash back the glimmer of the lifted knife
" Too soon to dim its brightness with his blood!
" And Priests are found to teach, and men to deem
" That in the entrails, from the tortured frame
" Yet reeking torn, they read the hest of Heaven!—
" O race of mortal men! what lust, what vice
" Of appetite unhallowed, makes ye bold

" To gorge your greed on Being like your own?
" Be wiselier warned:—forbear the barbarous feast,
" Nor in each bloody morsel that ye chew
" The willing labourer of your fields devour!
" The God my utterance prompts! I may not thwart
" The prompting God, that bids these lips disclose
" Oracular the secret of the skies,
" The scheme and purpose of the Mind Supreme,
" And all the mighty mysteries, hidden long
" From earlier quest.—What joy! amid the stars
" To soar, and cloud-borne, from this cloggy Earth
" Uplifted, as from Atlas' shoulders view
" Beneath the blinded souls of men that, void
" Of reason, grope in darkness, terrified
" At prospect of their end,—and thus, with rede
" Inspired, declare the ordinance of Fate!
" O Race of men, with fear of chilly Death
" Perturbed and quaking,—whence this idle dread
" Of Styx or Hades,—empty names,—the dream
" Of Bards whose fancy fills with torments feigned
" A fabled World?—This bodily frame, dissolved
" By age, disease, or blazing pyre, endures
" But seeming harm. The Soul, that cannot die,
" Its ancient dwelling quits but to inform
" With life some newer tenement.—I bear
" In memory yet how, at beleaguered Troy,
" Myself was once Euphorbus, Panthus' heir,
" And in that strife met death-wound from the spear
" Of Atreus' lesser son:—nor long ago
" In Juno's Argive fane suspended saw
" And recognised the shield that there I bore.

"All changes:—nothing perishes!—Now here,
"Now there, the vagrant spirit roves at will,
"The shifting tenant of a thousand homes:—
"Now, elevate, ascends from beast to man,—
"Now, retrograde, descends from man to beast;—
"But *never dies!*—Upon the tablet's page
"Erased, and written fresh, the characters
"Take various shape,—the wax remains the same:—
"So is it with the Soul that, migrating
"Through all the forms of breathing life, retains
"Unchanged its essence.—O be wise, and hear
"Heaven's warning from my prophet-lips, nor dare
"With impious slaughter, for your glutton-greed,
"The kindly bond of Nature violate,
"Nor from its home expel the Soul, perchance
"Akin to yours, to nourish blood with blood!
"Now list, while, launched upon a boundless Sea
"Yet unexplored—all canvas set—I sail!
"Perpetual Change is Nature's life and law.
"Naught permanent endures. Eternal flux
"Renews the world:—and, mobile from its birth,
"All sentient essence shifts from form to form.
"Time's very self flows as the river runs:—
"Nor stream nor hour can stop. As in the flood,
"Prior or sequent, in continual chase
"Wave urges wave, pursuing and pursued,—
"So each on each the hurrying moments press
"In ever-fresh succession. Yesterday,
"That was, is dead;—To-day, that was not, is;—
"And dies To-morrow!—Time is ever new!
"Observe how darkness gradual clears to dawn,—

"How day with cheerful beam succeeds to night:—
"What different dye the Heavens assume, when drowned
"In midnight-slumber lies the weary world;—
"When first the white steed of the morning-star
"Springs forth to run his course;—or when, again,
"Aurora, herald of the stronger day,
"To Phœbus yields her tender-tinted skies.
"The orbèd shield that loads the Day-God's arm
"When first above the horizon's marge he mounts,—
"When last below the horizon's marge he sinks,—
"Glows crimson-red;—but in his noontide height
"He shines with whiter radiance, throned in air
"More pure, and farther from the taint of Earth.
"Nocturnal Dian's face not twice alike
"Looks down from Heaven;—or, waxing, than to-night
"With ampler round she lights to-morrow's eve,
"Or, waning, fainter beams with lessened orb.
"Mark, in the circuit of the quartered year,
"How Season following Season typifies
"The life of man. The Spring is as the child
"New-weaned, yet craving for the Mother's breast;—
"The tender delicate nursling of the months
"That bid the herbage wear a fresher green,—
"And prank with early flowers the laughing meads,—
"That glad with swelling bud and sprouting blade
"The hopeful farmer's heart;—delicious time
"Of promise, ere maturing suns impart
"Strength to the stalk and virtue to the leaf.
"The year grows strong in Summer, as the Boy
"Adult in Man:—then lustier Nature teems
"Prolific most,—then hottest boils the blood.

" Mature and mild,—the fever of the pulse
" That vexes youth subdued to temperate heat,—
" A traveller more than midway on the path
" 'Twixt birth and death, with lines of silvering gray
" Streaking his locks, comes sober Autumn next:—
" And last, with visage pinched and hobbling gait
" Old Winter,—all the honours of his head
" Or lost, or thin, and white as driven snow.
" Our very bodies change. We shall not be,
" To-morrow, what but yesterday we were,
" Or are to-day. Time was, when in the womb
" We dwelt,—a drop, the germ of possible man,
" Was all our substance. Nature's cunning hand,
" In pity of the Mother's throes, sets free
" The waxing embryo,—leads us forth to light
" And air and life:—the feeble Infant first,
" Powerless to move or speak:—in time, the Babe
" That prone, four-footed like a beast o' the field,
" Makes shift to crawl:—the Child, that later taught
" To stand,—its lax and nerveless limbs sustained
" From fall by aid of go-cart or of chair,—
" Essays with tottering effort unassured
" Its earliest steps:—the strong and active Boy:—
" And last,—the holiday of Youth played out,—
" The strife and struggle of the middle years
" Fought to the end,—the Veteran, limping down
" The hill that slopes to Age,—the Thief that waits
" Below to filch from frame and soul alike
" All vigour of the Past, nor in the wreck
" Leaves trace of what he steals. Old Milo weeps
" To feel the arms, whose solid muscle matched

" Of yore Alcides' own, hang nerveless now
" And flaccid from his side:—and Helen's eyes
" Are wet with tears to see her mirror's orb
" Reflect the wrinkles of a withered hag,
" That can but wonder why she twice was raped!
" So all-devouring Time and envious Age
" In ever-ravenous banquet waste and mar
" All mortal kind, and leave to lingering Death
" The torn and mangled relics of the feast.
" Nor what we call the Elements abide
" More constant;—note what change they undergo.
" Four generative Powers combine to form
" The World's eternal mass:—whereof are two
" By their own weight depressed to lower place,
" Water and Earth:—two lighter and aloft
" Aspiring, Air, and Fire more pure than Air:
" Distinct in station all, but each from each
" Developed still, and each in each resolved.
" Earth into Water melts, and, rarefied,
" Water to Air; Air lightened more of weight
" Ascends and gleams aloft in subtlest Fire.
" Then backward runs the order;—re-condensed
" The Fire is Air, Air Water, Water Earth.
" Nor long the same rests either,—Nature so
" With everlasting change of form to form
" Repairs her restless bulk. In all the space
" Of this huge World naught perishes! The shape
" And aspect vary, but the Thing remains.
" In Birth—so-called—we but begin to be
" Something we were not earlier;—and in Death
" But cease to be the same that now we are.

" The sum of matter, shifted here and there,
" Is constant:—but nor part nor particle
" Unchanged its form original maintains.
" Thus, in the process of the vanished years,
" The Age of Iron heired the Age of Gold:—
" Thus local chance and fortune change the face
" Of Earth, and Place is mutable as Time.
" Myself have sailed on Seas that cover now
" What once was solid Land,—have trodden Land
" Where erst was Sea;—and gathered, inland far,
" Pink ocean-shells, and in the mountain's top
" Imbedded found the anchor's rusty fluke.
" The lapse of Waters to a hollow vale
" Will groove the plain, and to the level dwarf
" The sapped and crumbling hills. Where earlier stood
" The Lake, a Desert spreads its waste of sand,—
" And the once-thirsty Desert floats, a Lake.
" New Springs gush forth, and ancient Fountains fail;
" And Earth, yet tortured with her primal throes,
" Yawns here to give fresh Rivers birth, and there
" To drink old floods and leave their channels dry.
" In such a chasm sinks Lycus, but to rise
" Elsewhere and roll adown a foreign bed.
" So buried Erasinus starts to life
" Renewed in Argive fields. And legend tells
" How Mysus, of his ancient source and banks
" A-weary, dived beneath, to find afar
" New birth and name, and as Caïcus flow.
" To-day, a torrent Amenanus foams
" Thick with Sicilian sands; to-morrow, locks
" Fast in its caves his prisoned flood, and bares

"A dry and thirsty channel to the Sun.
"Anigros once,—if Poets' tales be sooth,—
"Ran wholesome, potable:—the bi-form brood
"Of Centaurs, bleeding from Alcides' shafts,
"And plunging there to lave their gory flanks,
"Tainted the stream,—and no man tastes it more.
"The hill-born flood of Scythian Hypanis,
"Sweet at the source, turns brackish as it flows.
"Antissa, Pharos, and Sidonian Tyre,
"Once girdled by the waves, are isles no more:
"While Leucas, tilled of old by mainland swains,
"Now rent and parted stands a sea-girt Isle.
"Sicilian Zancle to Italian soil
"Was wedded erst, till Neptune broke the bond
"And through the strait his raging billows poured.
"Who seeks for Buris now or Helice,—
"Achaia's earlier boast,—may find them yet,
"But find them drowned:—beneath the clearer wave
"Of summer-seas the mariner will show
"The buried towns and trace their slanting walls.
"Hard by Pitthæan Trœzen stands a hill,
"Steep, without shade of tree;—a plain of yore,
"A mountain now,—since, strange to tell, the force
"Of winds in cavernous prison pent beneath,
"Chafing to find some vent to freer air,—
"Some chink or cranny in their dungeon's roof
"To give their fury way,—and baffled still
"Of exit, dome-like heaved the crusting soil
"Dilated, as an urchin's breath will puff
"A bladder, or some autumn vintager
"The goat's distended skin. Conspicuous yet,

" Hardened by Time, the mighty tumour stands,
" And to the vulgar seems a natural hill.
" Of thousand more examples yet a few
" I cite, perchance familiar. Water's self
" Hath varying virtue. Hornèd Ammon's fount
" At noon is ice; at eve or dawning boils!—
" A staff, when thinnest pales the waning moon,
" In Athamanian springs immersed, will blaze
" A kindled torch!—Athwart Ciconia's plains
" A river flows that freezes with its draught
" The drinker's very vitals, and transforms
" Whate'er it laves to stone.—Our neighbour streams
" Crathis and Sybaris, with fairer tint,
" Amber or gold, will dye the bather's locks.—
" Nor lacks in some the stranger power to work
" On soul as well as body. Who but knows
" The story of that Carian fount obscene
" Of Salmacis, or of the Æthiop lakes
" Whereof who drinks goes straightway mad, or falls
" Stupid and senseless in lethargic sleep?—
" Who quaffs but once of Cleitor's spring will loathe
" The taste of wine, nor save with water slake
" His thirst thereafter;—whether in the flood
" Some native coldness dwells, antagonist
" To draughts of hotter gust;—or,—since what time
" (As legend vouches) Amithaon's Son,
" With chant, and herb, and potion of that fount,
" Restored to sense the maddened Prœtides,
" The sobering lymph retains its hate of wine.
" With opposite power endowed Lyncestius flows,
" Whereof who does but sip will reel away,

"As drunk, and giddy with unmingled wine.
"Arcadian Ladon—Pheneos called of old—
"Suspected pours a doubtful wave,—at night
"A poison, but by day a wholesome draught.
"So Lakes and Rivers various virtues own.
"Time was, when, wandering restless o'er the Deep
"Ortygia floated,—stable now in place
"Amid her sister-isles:—when Argo shot
"In fear and trembling through the perilous strait
"Where, churned to foam betwixt the bandying rocks
"The earlier flood not barred from shock and clash
"The vexed Symplegades, that steadfast now
"Abide nor care for any wind that blows.
"Time was, ere yet the furnace at the heart
"Of sulphurous Ætna blazed;—and time will be
"When it shall blaze no more. For—whether Earth
"Is animal, and lives, and breathing flame
"Through thousand spiracles, requires to shift
"(With earthquake pangs and fissure here or there
"Now cleft now closed,) her respirative vents;—
"Or whether winds deep pent in cavernous cells,
"Explosive, force aloft in flinty shower
"The fragments of their shattered prison, fraught
"With seeds of fire that, hurtling as they mount,
"Break into flame, and, setting Earth a-light,
"Blaze out till—all their fury spent—they die,
"And vacant leave a cooled and windless cave:—
"Whether some central mass bituminous,
"Some sulphurous core, ignites, and burns till all
"Its unctuous substance, charred, in dwindling spire
"Of feeble smoke evaporates:—howsoe'er

" This be,—the Time will come, when Earth must lack
" Fresh aliment of flame, and Nature's fires,
" With sæcular blaze exhausted, lose their force,
" And spent and starved for lack of fuel die.
" North of Pallene dwells, if Fame be true,—
" A Hyperborean race that, in the Lake
" Tritonian nine times bathing, rises clad
" With downy vest and feathered like the birds.
" I doubt the story:—though in similar guise,
" Smeared with some magic juice, the Scythian crones
" Are said to wing the air. But instances
" Analogous, and proved, compel belief.
" Who has not seen how bodies, putrefied
" By slow decay or liquefying heat,
" Minuter life engender?—Go! and kill
" The lordly Bull, and bury—not too deep—
" The carcass:—and his festering bulk, as well
" Experience knows, will generate a swarm
" Of bees that, with ancestral industry
" And loving labour, crop the honeyed fields
" And glad the hive with hope of winter-store.—
" The horse, inhumed, will give the hornet birth.—
" Tear from the stranded crab his arching claws,—
" Bury the rest,—and lo! a scorpion springs
" To life, and threatening curls his venomous tail!
" The grub that in his filmy tunic sheathed
" Hangs on the leaf,—as every rustic knows,—
" Transmuted flutters out a baneful moth.
" The slime of ponds, instinct with embryo-life,
" Begets the green-and-yellow-coated frog,—
" A limbless tadpole born,—that, as he grows,

" With oary feet developed cleaves the pool,
" And legs that, framed for active spring, behind
" Are longer than before.—The she-bear's cub
" New-whelped is but a formless lump of flesh
" That, licked and fashioned by the mother's tongue,
" Takes shape at last and semblance like her own.—
" The tenant of the hive's hexagonal cell
" At birth is memberless, and, but with time
" Matured, finds legs to crawl and wings to fly.—
" Who, that not knows the fact, would possible
" The fact believe, that, from the central yolk
" Cased in the egg-shell's round should spring the bird
" Of Juno, glorious with its fan-like tail
" Be-sprent with stars,—the Eagle-Squire that bears
" The Thunderer's weapons,—Cytherea's doves,—
" And every meaner fowl that wings the sky?—
" There are who hold that in the spine of Man
" Deceased, and in the vaulted tomb corrupt,
" The festering marrow quickens to a snake!
" So various life hath various origin
" And foreign-seeming source.—One bird alone
" Can renovate and reproduce itself,—
" Assyria's Phœnix;—not with vulgar food
" Nurtured of grain or herb, but fed with tears
" Wept from the incense-tree and amber drops
" Of rich Amomus' gums. Five centuries
" He lives, and, when the last is at its close,
" With beak and claw constructs, amid the boughs
" Of ilex or the palm-tree's waving crown,
" A nest with aromatic texture lined
" Of cassia, spikenard, and the shredded bark

" Of cinnamon, and myrrha's golden leaf;
" Then on the kindled fragrance takes his place,
" And in a blaze of odorous flame expires!
" But, of his Father's ashes born, there springs
" An infant Phœnix, destined to a life
" Long as his sire's; that—so the story runs—
" Soon as his stronger wings are nerved to bear
" Such burden, lightens of its load the tree,
" And, bearing on his back his Father's tomb,
" His proper cradle, seeks with southward flight
" The City of the Sun, and in the porch
" Of Helios' temple lays the sacred freight.
" Does this your wonder move?—Then more admire
" How years alternate change Hyæna's sex,
" A twelvemonth female and a twelvemonth male!—
" How, fed on air, Chamæleon with the hue
" Of what he touches dyes his fickle skin!—
" How India's Lynx, to the victorious car
" Of Bacchus harnessed, from his bladder voids
" A stream congealed in voidance, crystallised
" Ere touch of Earth to gems!—How flexible
" Beneath the Deep the branching Coral waves
" Its vegetable arms, and but with breath
" Of upper air is hardened into stone!—
" The day would fail, and Phœbus in the wave
" Refresh his panting team, ere I exhaust
" The catalogue of Change. Enough!—Ye know
" How, with vicissitude of lapsing years,
" States have their flux and Nations wax and wane.
" Great Troy, that scarce could count for multitude
" Her muster-roll of heroes,—that, besieged,

" Had strength to bear a ten-years' drain of blood,—
" Lies low in ruin, and, for all the wealth
" She owned but shows her children's crumbling tombs!
" Mycenæ,—Sparta,—Cecrops' Town,—the walls
" Amphion built,—were strong and famous once:—
" What are they now?—Mycenæ's lofty towers
" Long since are levelled,—Sparta is a waste,—
" Ædipodean Thebes a Poet's myth,—
" And Pandionian Athens but a name!—
" To-day, Fame loudest bruits the rising power
" Of that new City, founded fast and strong
" By Tiber's stream of Appeninus born,
" Dardanian Rome,—that widens with her growth
" The limits of her sway, in riper time
" The destined Empress of the measureless World!
" The Seers have said it, and the Oracles
" Whose voice is Fate.—Thus, when beleaguered Troy
" Was tottering to her fall,—(as I myself
" Heard and remember,—) to Æneas, sad
" For Ilion's fate and doubtful of his own,
" Spake Helenus, King Priam's prophet-son:—
" ' O Goddess-born!—if e'er event has proved
" ' My foresight true, be comforted!—for Troy
" ' Not all can perish while Æneas lives!
" ' Foe, fire, and sword will yield thee way to fly
" ' And with thee carry Pergamus, afar
" ' On foreign shores and friendlier than thine own
" ' To found a happier Troy. Lo! Phrygian-built
" ' I see the glorious City,—never Town
" ' That was, or is, or shall be, half so fair!
" ' By many a famous chief through many an age

" ' To Empire trained, till of Iulus' blood
" ' Comes One, to set upon her queenly brows
" ' The diadem of the World, and,—that high task
" ' For Earth performed,—by the impatient Gods
" ' Demanded, pass too soon from Rome to Heaven!'
" So to the chief that, later, from the flames
" Bore safe his household-Gods, spake Helenus:
" And I, who heard, then Trojan, hail to-day
" The new-born City of my ancient kin,
" And joy to know Greece conquered but to give
" To Phrygia's sons in Rome a nobler Troy!
" But,—for 'tis time I check my swerving steeds
" Forgetful of the goal,—the sum is this:—
" In Heaven, in Earth, in all above, below,
" Life shifts with endless change from form to form.
" O let us then, who parcel of this whole
" Exist, not corporal merely, but with souls
" Endowed that, in migration, capable
" Of other homes, may animate a beast,
" Respect the bodies that perchance may house
" The spirit of our brother, or our kin,
" Or, at the least, our fellow-man:—nor dare
" To violate the sacred seat of Life,
" And with Thyestes' banquet foul the board!
" Oh! evil-schooled is he, and evil-trained
" To human slaughter, that with barbarous knife
" Can slit the weasand of the calf, and hear
" Unmoved his lowing victim plead for life!—
" That slays the innocent kid, with feeble bleat
" Protesting, piteous as an infant's cry!—
" Or feeds upon the fowl himself hath fed!—

"What lacks he yet, save time, for deeper guilt?—
"A bloody path he treads,—and but a step
"Will lead him on to murder!—Let the ox
"Still plough your fields,—the sheep her fleece supply
"To wrap you from the cold,—the she-goat drain
"Her udder for your draught,—nor die before
"Their date, and but to Nature owe their end!
"Renounce the trap, the mesh, the lime-twig set
"To snare the feathered race!—Unstring the bow
"Bent for the slaughter of the bounding stag!
"Nor in the bait conceal the treacherous hook!
"Whate'er is noxious kill—as kill ye may—
"But only kill:—forbear the guilty feast,
"And live content with Nature's fitter food!"
So taught the Samian:—and, with all his lore
Instructed, home came Numa, to assume
Unsought consenting Latium's offered crown.
A Nymph his Bride—and every Muse his friend—
A happy Prince he reigned, that to the Gods
Due service taught of rite and sacrifice,
And bade a savage People, nursed in War,
The blessing learn of Peace and peaceful arts.
For him, when full of years he closed at once
His reign and life, the daughters of the land
Went mourning, and the sons; and o'er his tomb
Patrician and Plebeian wept alike.
From Rome self-banished fled his widowed spouse
Egeria, buried in the woods that shade
Aricia's vale; and, inconsolable,
With plaint and moan perpetual vexed the rites
Of Orestean Dian.—Ah! how oft

The Nymphs of grove and fountain would reprove
Her obstinate grief,—how oft the Hero-son
Of Theseus bid her moderate the tears
Too long indulged:—"Not thou alone"—he said—
"Hast suffered!—Look around thee, and with sight
"Of others' sorrows easier bear thine own!
"I would than mine some readier tale I knew
"To lesson thee to patience,—yet mine own
"May serve. Thine ears, belike, in happier days
"Have heard the name of that Hippolytus
"Who by a lying Step-dame and a Sire
"Too blindly credulous was done to death:—
"Strange as 't may seem, and haply past belief,
"That same Hippolytus am I,—whom erst
"Pasiphaë's lustful daughter wooed in vain
"To wrong my Father's bed,—and, or in fear
"Of guilt exposed or furious at repulse,
"With shifted accusation charged on me
"The foul proposal of her proper lust.
"With curses heaped upon my parting head
"My Father drove me forth:—and fugitive
"I sought Pitthæan Trœzen. As my car
"Traversed the sands that skirt Corinthus' gulf,
"To mountain-height the waters swelled, and heaved
"A cloven crest, whence with tremendous roar
"Emerged a monster Bull, that o'er the flood
"Breast-high from mouth and nostril spouted forth
"Another sea of foam. My train aghast
"Beheld:—for me, my banishment engrossed
"My every thought nor left me room for fear.
"But as my mettled steeds turned Ocean-ward

"Their eyes and saw that hideous beast, with ears
"Erect in terror plunging from the track
"They swerved, and headlong o'er the jutting rocks
"Ungovernable whirled the reeling car.
"Bridle and housing white with snorted foam
"They sped:—I, backward bending all my weight,
"Tugged at the straining reins, in hope to curb
"Their mad career. And yet, methinks, my strength
"Their rage had mastered:—but a fatal stump
"Projecting caught the swaying chariot's spokes,
"And from the axle rent the shattered wheel.
"Headlong I fell! and, tangled in the reins
"Was dragged,—my followers saw the sickening sight,—
"My trailing entrails torn by stock and stone,—
"My mangled limbs, part with the whirling car
"Whirled on, part scattered on the rending rocks,—
"And heard the crashing of my pounded bones,—
"Till brayed and battered out the weary soul
"Expired, and left a palpitating mass,
"No part no feature cognisable more,
"One mere contusion, one enormous wound!
"What likeness, what proportion bears thy woe,
"Too querulous Nymph, to mine?—who saw, besides,
"The darksome nether realm of Shades, and bathed
"In Phlegethon my lacerated corse,
"Thence only by the arts of Phœbus' son
"With medicinal herb and potent drug,
"In spite of jealous Dis, restored to life.
"Around me, lest my sight should wake anew
"The malice of my foes, Diana flung
"A cloud, and safe from recognition clad

"My form with semblance of maturer years.
"Long doubtful or in Delos or in Crete
"To fix my dwelling,—both alike renounced,—
"She placed me here, and bade me bear no more
"The name suggestive of those fatal steeds:—
"'Hippolytus of yore be Virbius now!'
"She said:—and, from that time, a minor God,
"And in her gracious tutelage secure,
"I haunt her grove and follow in her train."
But never tale of others' griefs might soothe
Egeria's woe:—upon the mountain-slopes
Weeping she lay, till Phœbus' Sister, moved
To pity of that pious sorrow, changed
The mourner to a fount that, icy-cold,
Distils in flood perpetual as her tears.
Amazed the Mountain-Nymphs the miracle
Beheld; nor less the Amazonian-born
Astounded stood, than erst the Tuscan swain
That in his furrow saw the senseless clod
Self-stirred upheave, and, with no help of hand
Moulded to human shape, its new-born lips
Unclose with presage of events to come.
Tages men named the marvellous creature, first
To teach Etruria's the skill they boast
In divination and prophetic lore.—
Not less surprised Rome's Founder saw his spear,
At random launched, in Palatinus' slope
Yet quivering, for a fibrous root exchange
Its steely barb,—and watched the weapon grow
And bourgeon to a stately tree, and cool
The wondering hill with unexpected shade.—

Not more astounded Cippus,—Rome-ward bound
Victorious from the field,—when in the stream
He saw strange horns reflected on his brow,
And, laughing at the quaint illusion, raised
A careless hand and felt what he beheld!
And, so convinced his eyes not played him false,
Bade halt his following, and with hands outspread
And Heaven-ward glance,—" O all ye Gods!" he said—
" Whate'er event this portent signifies,
" If well it bodes, to Rome and to her sons
" Assign the good!—if ill, to me the harm!"
Then on a turf-built altar to the flames
Incense he gave, and wine, and sacrifice,
And in the victim's quivering entrails sought
To read his fate. Of gravest import seemed
The omens, yet obscure:—the Tuscan Seer
Gazed long and doubtful,—then, with kindling glance
Uplifted to the horns on Cippus' brow,—
" All hail!" he cried, " O King!—for Latium's crown
" To thee and to thy horns the Fates have given!
" The hour is come! Pass yonder gates, and reign,
" And give to Rome an endless line of Kings!"
Back sprang the Chief, and from the City's walls
Turned resolute his eyes:—" Now may the Gods
" Avert"—he cried—" such omens!—Better far
" Exiled I live, and die a banished man,
" Than yon free Capitol see me crowned a King!"
He spake, and straight to council summoned forth
The People and the Senate. Round his brows
A laurel wreath he bound that veiled his horns,
And, from the rampart that begirt his camp,

First fortified with solemn prayer to Heaven,
Bespake the multitude:—"Among us here
"Stands one"—he cried—"who, suffered to set foot
"In Rome, will be your King!—I name him not
"Save by this sign:—a hornèd brow he bears!
"Let him but pass your City's gates,—if truth
"Be in your Augurs' rede, that hornèd man
"Will make ye slaves!—He might have passed ere now,
"For I alone withstood him, and yet none
"Is nearer to my love. Or banish him,
"Quirites! or in fetters bind him fast,
"If chains be pledge enough, or by his blood
"Assure the freedom perilled while he lives!"
He said:—and through the crowd such murmur ran
As Eurus in the pine-woods' pillared aisles
Is wont to waken,—like the distant roar
Of Ocean breaking on a shingly strand:
But dominant o'er the tumult rang distinct
One cry—"His name! his name!"—and each man cast
Suspicious looks upon his neighbour's brows,
Seeking that ominous badge.—"Behold him here!"
The Hero cried,—and, tearing from his front
The veiling garland, showed the horns he bore.
From all the throng one moan of sorrow broke,
And down each glance was bent:—they *would* not see
That honoured brow's dishonour. "Wear again"—
They cried—"the laurel! Never Conqueror more
"Deserved the wreath!"—And of the public land
To the self-banished Exile gave such space
As from the rising to the setting Sun
His ploughshare might encircle. Yet in Rome

There stand the brazen columns, long to stand,
With Cippus' horns engraved and Cippus' tale.
Ye Sisters Nine, that present aid all song,
Tell now,—for faithful of remotest eld
Ye keep the record,—how Coronis' son,
Shrined in the isle by cloven Tiber laved,
Found place and honour 'mid the Gods of Rome!
Long years ago a direful Pestilence
Tainted the air of Latium:—bloodless, pale,
Men drooped, and sank, and rotted ere they died:—
Incessant funerals blackened all the land:—
No cure, no check:—the malady defied
The Leech's baffled art. Then, desperate
Of human help, to Heaven they turned for aid.
To Phœbus' Delphian seat, the Oracle
Central of Earth, ambassadors they sent,
And prayed the God some wholesome counsel give
To heal the suffering State. Beneath their feet
Earth quaked, and on the laurel's rustling boughs
The pendent quiver rattled, as the Voice
Made answer, awful, from the inmost shrine:—
"Roman! what here thou seekest, nearer home
"Thou should'st have looked for!—nearer seek it yet!
"For not Apollo, but Apollo's child,
"Must cure your City's plague. Depart in peace,
"And with good omens bear my Son to Rome!"
That answer heard and weighed,—the chosen seat
Of Æsculapius ascertained,—once more
The Fathers bade their Envoy cross the seas
To Epidaurus. Soon as in the port
He anchored,—audience of the Senate sought

And gained,—he told the Oracle, and prayed
The Argive Sires bestow on Rome the God
So Fate-ordained to heal Ausonia's wound.
  Opinions varied:—part inclined to grant
The help so sorely needed,—part refused
To rob their City of her boast and yield
To stranger-hands their tutelary God:
And, ere debate was ended, fell the shades
Of Eve, and Night in darkness wrapped the world.
Then by the slumbering Roman's couch there stood
In dreams the healing God,—as in his fane
Ye see him,—smoothing with his better hand
The reverend honours of his chin,—his left
On rustic staff supported. Calm, and clear,
Gracious he spake:—"Dismiss thy doubt!—I come!
"But not as now thou seest me. Mark the Snake
"That twines around this staff,—observe him well
"So as again to know him:—to such shape
"Transformed, but larger, as befits a God,
"I go with thee to Rome!"—He said, and ceased;—
And with the ceasing voice the vision fled,
And with the vision Night and Sleep,—and Dawn
On Darkness followed.—Soon as from the Skies
Aurora chased the Stars, yet unresolved
Of answer to the Godhead's stately fane
The Fathers took their way, and bade Himself
By some clear sign make manifest what seat
His choice preferred. Scarce ended was the prayer,
When awful hissing from the shrine announced
The present God:—and forth, with golden crest,
Writhing in sinuous volume, serpentine,

He came:—from marble floor to gilded roof
The Temple quaked;—statue, and altar-stone,
Column, and portal, rocked.—Adown the nave
Midway he paused, and, rearing half his coils
Erect, around him rolled his fiery eyes.
Awe-stricken stood the throng. The Priest alone,—
His blameless brows with snowy fillet bound,—
His Master recognised:—"The God! 'tis He!
"The God!" he cried—"Be still! Let no man speak!
"O glorious Presence! be this sight the pledge
"Of grace and favour to thy loyal town!"
He said:—and reverent the adoring crowd
Echoed the pious prayer. With other hope
In silent worship knelt the Sons of Rome.
To these the Serpent bent his head, and, thrice
His crest erecting, thrice with flickering tongue
Hissed favourable omen. Then adown
The porch's marble steps majestical
He glided, turning still a backward glance
Of Farewell to his altar and his fane
Abandoned, and the home so long his own:
Along the crowded streets thick-carpeted
With scattered flowers he swept, and, mounting now
The mole that guards the harbour from the Sea,
Once more He paused, and to his priestly train
Attendant, and the throng that convoyed him,
With gracious gesture seemed to signify
Thanks and dismissal. Then on board the bark
Of Latium, conscious of her freight divine,
And strained with burden of immortal weight,
He passed, and took his place. Upon the strand

A Bull to Jove the thankful Roman slew:—
Then, garlanding with flowers his galley's mast,
His cable loosed and parted. Fair for Rome
The wafting breezes blew. Upon the poop,
Conspicuous, coiled in many a gleaming orb,
The Godhead held his station, watching calm
The azure waves. Five days the gentle breath
Of Zephyr sped her o'er the Ionian deep,
And, with the sixth, Ausonia's welcome shores
Were sighted. Iapygia far astern
Faded from view:—by Juno's templed steep
Lacinian, and by Scylace she flew:—
Seaward her flashing oars were bent to shun
Amphissa's rocky shoals:—Ceraunia's cliff
Precipitous was rounded:—flying South
Romechium, Caulon, and Narycia watched
Her vanishing sails:—the perilous Strait was stemmed
By Siculan Pelorus overhung:—
And northward now she headed, past the Isles
Æolian,—past Leucosia,—past the mines
Of Temese, and past the sunny fields
Where deep in roses stand the Pæstan fanes.
By Capreæ thence, and by the promontory
Crowned with Minerva's temple,—by the vines
That clothe Surrentum's hills, and by the town
Of Hercules,—by Stabiæ,—by thy seat
Of ease and soft delight, Parthenope,—
Beyond Cumæa's Sibyl's ancient shrine,—
Beyond Linternum's steaming founts and groves
Of odorous mastic,—where Vulturnus rolls
Turbid with sand his torrent to the Sea,—

By Sinuessa's snake-infested shore,—
By fever-vexed Minturnæ,—by the town
Named from the Nurse by Venus' son entombed,—
And by the City of Antiphates,—
By Trachas' marsh-girt walls,—by Circe's realm,—
To Antium's firmer beach she passed:—and there—
For now the heaving waters boded storm—
Awhile furled sail and moored. The Serpent-God
His orbèd folds uncoiling shoreward trailed
His bulk voluminous, and to the fane
Raised to his Sire beside the yellow strand
Paid duteous visit. When the Seas were calmed,—
That hospitable shelter left,—again
He sought the ship:—against his scaly mail
The furrowed shingle rattled as he passed.—
And, swarming up the rudder, took again
His station on the poop:—till by the walls
Of Castrum, by Lavinium's sacred seat,
By Ostia's port, up Tiber's stream she turned,
Breasting the flood for Rome. Tumultuous forth
The City poured to greet her:—high and low,—
Burgher and Dame,—the holy Maids that guard
The flame of Trojan Vesta swelled the throng,—
With loud acclaim of welcome!—On the banks,
As swift her oarsmen stemmed the adverse stream,
Blazed a long line of altars, sweetening Heaven
With fume of crackling incense: and at each
Its ministering Priest, with reeking knife
Red from a slaughtered victim. Queenly Rome
By this was won. About the main-mast coiled
The Serpent-God ascending gazed around

In quest of fitting seat. A spot there stands,—
Rome calls it "Insula;"—the branching stream
Above it parts and reunites below,
With equal arm embracing either side.
That spot He chose; and thither from the bark
Of Latium gliding,—there enshrined,—again
His form celestial took. The Plague was stayed,—
And Rome reviving blessed the healing God!
So stands among her Deities enrolled
A stranger Power. In Julius she adores
Her City's genuine Son,—in Peace and War
Peerless alike:—nor for his conquests won
In field, for rule domestic,—for the life
That made his Rome the glory of the world,—
Worthier the place in Heaven where now he shines
In comet-radiance new among the stars,
Than for his Progeny. Of all his acts
Rome thanks him more for none than that he left
So great an Heir.—'Twas more, forsooth, to quell
The sea-girt Briton in his savage isle,—
Up the seven mouths of reedy Nile to steer
A conquering fleet,—on swart Numidia's plains
To crush Cinyphian Juba's rebel hordes,—
To break the spell of Mithridates' name
And fix on Pontus' neck the yoke of Rome!—
Four Triumphs won, and many more deserved,—
These were great deeds!—but greater far than these
To give the world a Sovereign in whose rule
The Gods ensure the welfare of mankind!
Lest such a Son should seem mere mortal-born
The Sire must needs be Deified. Too well

The golden Queen that gave Æneas birth
Foresaw her great Descendant's threatened doom,
The whetted daggers, and the traitor-band
Sworn to the Pontiff's murder,—and, through Heaven
To every God made protest:—"See!" she cried—
"This black conspiracy that threats my race!
"My one sole relic of Iulus' line!
"Am I alone for ever doomed to know
"No respite from vexation?—I,—who felt
"The spear of Calydonian Diomed,—
"I, in whose ears rings fearful yet the wail
"Of desolated Troy,—who saw my Son
"Driven far and wide a wanderer o'er the Seas,
"Ay, down to very Hell!—who watched his strife
"With Turnus or with Juno,—for 'twas She
"That stirred and fed the war!—Yet why recall
"My race's ancient wrongs, when present fear
"Absorbing leaves no leisure for their sense?
"At me these blades are aimed! Protect me, Gods!
"Forbid the crime! nor let these murderers quench
"The flame of Vesta in her Pontiff's blood!"
So, passionate, with impotent appeal
Through Heaven went Venus: and the pitying Gods
Were moved,—though never God may hope to change
The iron Laws of those old Sisters Three.
Yet manifest with token and with sign
Heaven spoke its horror of the woe to come:—
Through all the darkened welkin terrible
Rang tumult as of battle, trumpet-clang
And clash of rattling arms:—the saddened Sun
Gave lurid omen to the anxious Earth

Of that impending crime:—wild meteor-fires
Flashed torch-like 'mid the courses of the stars;
And bloody drops fell mingled with the showers.
The clear white face of Lucifer was blurred
With dusky stains:—the chariot of the moon
With sanguine spots be-sprent:—the Stygian owl
Foreboding hooted from a thousand towers:—
The ivory statues in a thousand fanes
Wept visible tears:—and in the sacred groves
Men heard, they say, mysterious chanted dirge
With threatening voices blent. No victim slain
Gave normal sign;—pale fibre, wasted heart,
And maimed and headless liver warned of blood
And civil tumult!—howl of midnight dogs
Vexed Forum, Fane, and Palace:—Shadowy forms
Of men long buried from the Silent Realm
Arose and visible wandered through the streets:—
And Earthquake tremors rocked the frighted town!
But, spite of sign and portent, Fate-ordained
The traitor-plot went on. The Temple's self
Saw flash the impious daggers! In all Rome
Guilt found no spot for murder's bloody work
So fitting as the Curia's sacred seat!
Then, frantic, on her breast with either hand
Smote Cytherea. With such cloud as erst
Saved Paris from the wrath of Atreus' son,
As rescued once Æneas from the steel
Of Diomed, she would have sped to shroud
His greater progeny:—but then out-spake
The Sire of Gods. "Think'st thou, fair Daughter mine,
"Alone to conquer Fate unconquerable?

" Seek, if thou wilt, thyself the dread abodes
" Where dwell the Sisters Three:—Thyself may'st see
" On massive tablets graved of brass and stone
" The course ordained of things, unchangeable,
" Eternal, and secure, though thunder-clash
" And lightning-blaze in ruin whelm the world!
" Read, written on those adamantine leaves,
" Thy race's destiny:—or hear from Me—
" Who read it there long since and mind it well—
" Its purport, and be warned of what must be!
" The life thine efforts, Goddess, would redeem
" Hath run its Fated course:—the years he owed
" To Earth are paid:—'tis thine to give him now
" Worship of men and place with Gods in Heaven.
" This be thy care, and His, who with the name
" Of Cæsar heirs the burden of his Rome;
" To whose great vengeance for his Parent slain
" Ourself shall be Ally. His conquering arms
" From siege shall free beleaguered Mutina:—
" Pharsalia and Philippi, twice with blood
" Œmathian crimsoned, shall confess his might:—
" And, on Sicilian seas, great Pompey's Son
" Than Pompey meet a Greater:—Ægypt's Queen
" Find vain the charms that won a Roman Spouse,
" And rue her vaunt to make the Capitol
" Bow vassal to Canopus!—Barbarous realms
" I count not, won on either side the Sea;
" For but to name them were to catalogue
" The habitable world! The Ocean's self
" Shall be his subject. Then, when Earth at peace
" His Empire owns and blesses, civil cares

"Shall claim him;—equal laws to him shall owe
"Their ordinance;—his great example rule
"The morals of the State. He, for the weal
"Of unborn generations provident,
"Born of his sacred Spouse shall leave an Heir
"Worthy his name and sceptre:—nor removed
"Till Time with glory crown him as with years
"Ascend to join his kindred orbs above!
"Meanwhile, be thine from yon slain corse to snatch
"The issuing soul, and change it to a Star
"That on my Forum and my Capitol
"For evermore shall favouring look from Heaven!"
Scarce had Jove ceased, when in the Senate's midst
Stood Venus, seen of none:—and, ere the soul
Of her slain Cæsar from the mangled limbs
New-parting vanished in dispersing air,
Caught it, and bore it upward to the stars;
And soaring felt it kindle, glow, and burst
In flame, and from her bosom flung the freight
Amid the Heavens. High o'er the moon it flew,
And, trailing lambent glory through the skies,
In spacious orbit whirled, amid the Fires
Celestial blazed a Comet!—Thence he sees
Earth happy in his Heir's benignant sway,
And, glad to be so conquered, in his Son
Exults to own a Greater than himself!
What though that pious Son would fain forbid
A praise beyond his Sire's,—the voice of Fame,
Fame the free Judge that, uncontrolled of Kings,
Her sentence speaks, disloyal here alone,
'Spite of his will, prefers him. Atreus so

In Agamemnon's glory saw his own
Transcended:—Theseus and Achilles so
Of Ægeus and of Peleus topped the fame:—
Or, not to miss a worthier parallel,—
So great Saturnus' self was less than Jove!
Jove rules the Heavens above:—Augustus rules
The Earth below:—alike in each we own
The Father and the Sovereign.——O Ye Gods
Whose guardianship of old from sword and flame
Led safe Anchises' Son! Ye native Powers
Rome's Deified Indigetes! and Thou,
Quirinus, Rome's great Author! and Thou, Mars,
Quirinus' Sire!—Bright Vesta, holiest held
Of Cæsar's household-Gods, and, by her side
Apollo, shrined domestic in his halls!
Thou, mightiest Jove, whose honoured temple crowns
The rock Tarpeian! and all Gods unnamed
Whose grace a Poet blameless may invoke!—
Far distant be the day, and to an age
Not ours deferred, when that belovèd Head
That rules the Earth shall quit it, and, a God,
From Heaven's great distance hear the prayers of Rome!

PERORATION.

So crown I here a work that dares defy
The wrath of Jove, the fire, the sword, the tooth
Of all-devouring Time!—Come when it will
The day that ends my life's uncertain term,—
That on this corporal frame alone hath power

To work extinction,—high above the Stars
My nobler part shall soar,—my Name remain
Immortal,—wheresoe'er the might of Rome
O'er-awes the subject Earth my Verse survive
Familiar in the mouths of men!—and, if
A Bard may prophesy, while Time shall last
Endure, and die but with the dying World!

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